PINKEY AND THE PLUMED KNIGHT

Written by
FREDERIC CHAPIN

Pictured by
MERL[illegible] JOHNSON

MERLE JOHNSON

To Max Wiggins.

From Grandma.

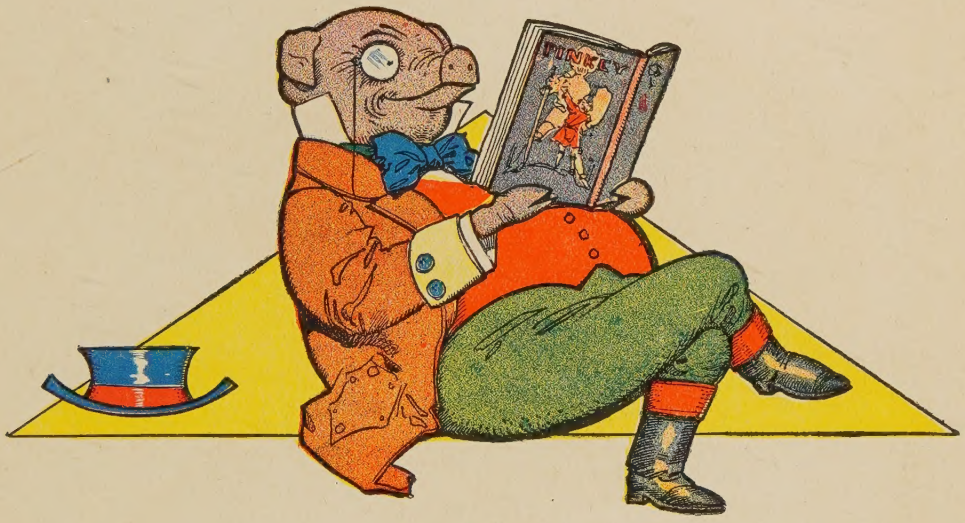
Xmas 1914

They saw the funnels and turrets of a fleet of battleships.

PINKEY

AND THE

PLUMED KNIGHT



BY

FREDERIC CHAPIN

PICTURED BY

MERLE JOHNSON

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DEDICATION

Every book should be dedicated to someone, either as a mark of respect, love or interest.

I dedicated "Toodles of Treasure Town and Her Snowman" to my wife and babies. This book I gladly dedicate to Mr. Bard Stephens, who encouraged me in my literary work when the horizon of success was merely a mirage.

FREDERIC CHAPIN.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE MAGIC SNUFF BOX

In a beautiful castle near the city of Glasgow, Scotland, there lived a little boy by the name of Donald McGregor. His father was a descendant of the well-known Rob Roy, in the days of Prince Charles and the War with England.

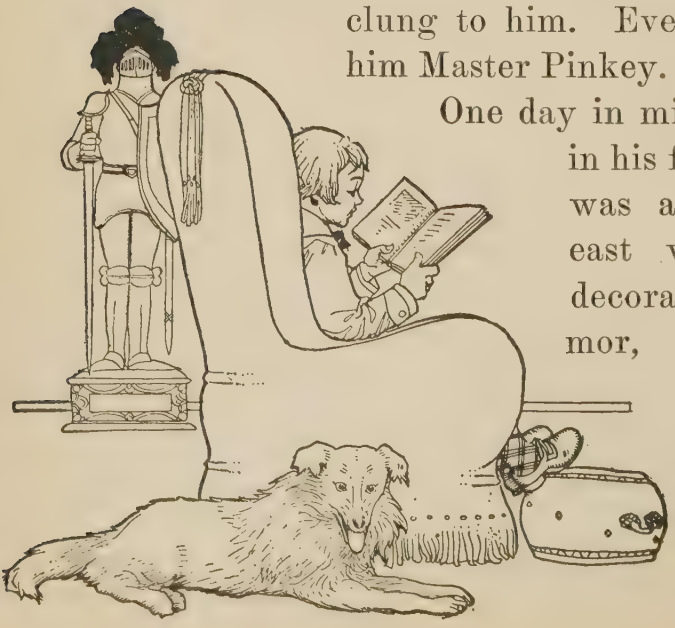
Donald's father was the Lord of Dunehurst, and he lived upon his vast estates as a rich gentleman should. As far as the eye could see, acre after acre, the country-folks would tell you they were part of the "Laird's estate."

This titled gentleman was a Colonel in the Scotch Guards, and when his regiment would assemble on the broad, flat fields of Dunehurst, they presented a remark-

able appearance with their tall, bear-skin hats, plaid kilts and stockings, showing the bare knees, a short jacket and broad sash that fastened over one shoulder. On drill days you could hear the shrill bagpipes as they rent the air with wheezy notes.

Donald for various reasons was left very much to himself. His papa and mama were always busy in pursuits that did not interest him, although he had a skilled tutor who gave him his lessons each morning. On this account it was not surprising that the boy sometimes got into mischief.

A striking peculiarity of the lord's family was their very red hair. On this account, Donald's father had always called him "Pinkey." In fact, his real name was very seldom mentioned and ever since he lay on a lace-trimmed pillow as a baby, the name of Pinkey clung to him. Even the servants called him Master Pinkey.

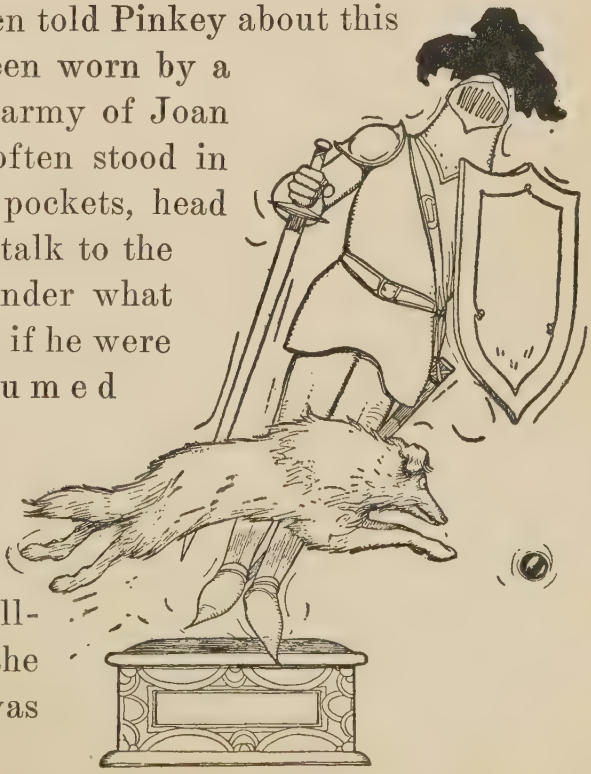


One day in midsummer, Pinkey sat in his father's library, which was a large room in the east wing of the castle, decorated with suits of armor, beautiful paintings, swords, claymores, spears, and many other valuable relics from the ancient

wars. The walls were lined with bookcases filled with books of fiction and history. Among the decorations was a figure—a suit of armor, standing at one side of the broad staircase. The shining breastplate, leggins of steel, and a steel helmet with a visor that could be raised or lowered over the face, made a very handsome addition to the room. From the top of the helmet there rose in a graceful curve a magnificent plume of scarlet.

Pinkey spent many happy hours in this room, and as he would read, his thoughts would often turn to the strange and silent figure that had stood in the same place for over a hundred years.

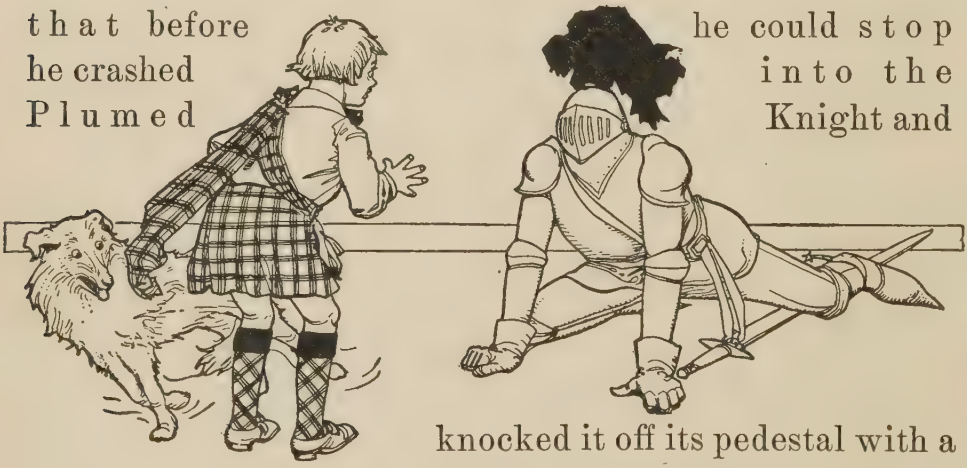
The "laird" had often told Pinkey about this figure—how it had been worn by a brave yeoman in the army of Joan of Arc. And as he often stood in front of it, hands in pockets, head to one side, he would talk to the silent Knight and wonder what he would say in return if he were alive. The "Plumed Knight" he called him.



Pinkey had a dog. All boys have dogs, and this one was a well-bred Scotch collie by the name of Hector. He was

Pinkey's constant companion and shared the boy's joys and sorrows.

As he sat at the table one day reading, he suddenly closed his book with a bang, and, raising his arms high above his head, stretched and yawned. Seeing a ball at his elbow, he idly picked it up and tossed it across the room. Hector, who always dozed with one eye open, took it as a bid for play and, scrambling to his feet, dashed after the ball with such speed that before he could stop he crashed into the Plumed Knight and



knocked it off its pedestal with a loud bang and a great clatter.

Pinkey jumped from his chair in alarm, for he knew he would be punished for romping in the library and possibly injuring the Plumed Knight, which the laird prized more highly than any heirloom in the castle.

He ran forward to pick the figure up and place it in position, when he noticed a snuff box that had fallen to the floor, its contents, a dark powder, scattered about the fallen Knight's head.

Wondering where it came from, he was about to lift the figure when he was astonished to see him sneeze. Scarcely believing his eyes and ears, he stepped back, and then, to his utter amazement, the Plumed Knight shook himself and scrambled to his feet.

Hector gave a yelp of terror and, with tail between his legs, dashed out of the room and never stopped until he reached the stables.

Pinkey was about to run, too, when the Knight raised his visor and looked at him intently. Recognizing the little chap who had often talked to him, he smiled and asked, "What has happened?" gazing around bewildered. "Have we taken Orleans? Where are my comrades and where is Joan of Arc? Don't tell me she is a prisoner!" and he grasped Pinkey's arm with a grip of steel.

"Ouch!" he cried as he jerked his arm loose from the mailed fist. "Let go—you're hurting me!" and he backed away in terror.

"I beg your pardon," the Knight said politely. "I must have been dreaming. The last I remember was falling from the walls of Orleans—but tell me what has happened. Where am I? This place is strange and yet it seems familiar."

"Well, it ought to be familiar to you," answered Pinkey, as he regained his power of speech. "You have stood here for over a hundred years."

"My, my! How time flies!" he murmured confusedly. "It seems only yesterday that I was fighting for our in-

spired and beloved leader, Joan of Arc."

"Joan of Arc?" Pinkey repeated after him, familiar with the history. "That happened so long ago that nobody lives who remembers it. You're in Scotland, in my father's castle—he is the Lord of Dunchurst."

"It is all very strange," was the most he could say as he sank into a chair and removed his helmet.

Pinkey regarded the stranger's features with interest. He had a large black mustache, dark pointed beard and long black hair. His face was truly the face of a warrior, but withal, there was a kindly expression in his eyes that told Pinkey he was a brave and good man. Reassured by his appearance, Pinkey sat down on the other side of table and studied the Knight with unconcealed admiration. "Have I been asleep?" the man asked finally.

"I don't know," Pinkey replied, simply. "I didn't even know you were inside the armor."

"Well, I've either been asleep or dead these many years, and if so, what brought me to life?"

"I'm sure I don't know," was the boy's reply. The mystery was too deep for him to solve. He glanced down at the floor and saw the snuff box and its spilled contents. Jumping from his seat, he picked it up, the Knight looking on as Pinkey turned the box upside down.

"What have you there?" he asked curiously.

"It looks like a snuff box," the boy observed, handing it to him. "It must have fallen out of your clothes when Hector knocked you down."

"Hector—who's Hector?"

"He's my dog," Pinkey answered proudly.

The Knight took the box and looked at it carefuly. He examined it inside and out, turned it over, and back again. On the inside of the cover he noticed some peculiar tracings and, rubbing away the dust with his finger, he read slowly, word by word:

He who takes one pinch of snuff
From out this box and sneezes
Can live and talk, that's enough,
And do whate'er he pleases.

When found, take me to Pyro, the wizard in the Land of the Lotus Flower, and receive a wonderful reward.

"This is an Egyptian relic, and very valuable," the Knight remarked solemnly.

"Then that was what brought you to life!" cried Pinkey excitedly. "Don't you see what it says—'Can live and talk'—and you sneezed, too."

"Did I?" he asked. "But where is this wonderful snuff? The box is empty."

"It's all over the floor," and the boy pointed to the powder that lay scattered about.

"Great catapults!" the Knight ejaculated, as he jumped to his feet. "Let us gather it up quick! That is the most wonderful powder I ever heard of. It must be very powerful and valuable."

And together they carefully scooped up every grain until the box was nearly full.

"There!" breathed the man with relief, "I am glad we lost none of it."

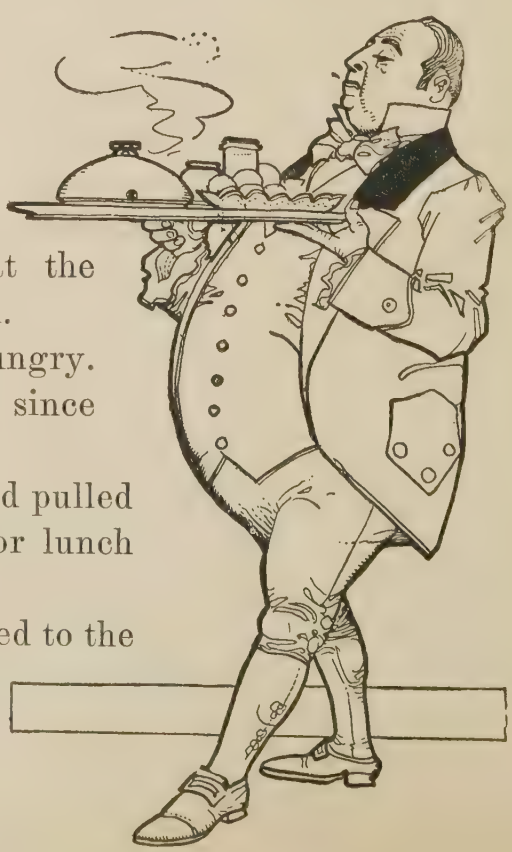
Suddenly he clapped his hands to his head, his face grew white and he staggered against the table.

"What's the matter?" cried Pinkey, in alarm at the strange weakness of the man.

"I feel faint—I must be hungry. You know it is a long time since I have eaten."

Pinkey ran to the wall and pulled the cord twice—a signal for lunch to be served.

The Plumed Knight crossed to the other side of the room and sank into a large chair,



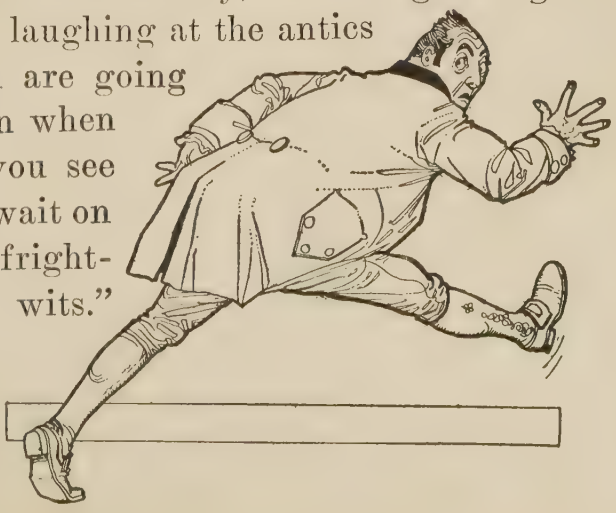
his steel clothes clanking at every step. When he walked, it sounded like a trolley car bumping over the railroad tracks.

The door opened immediately, and a stately butler in grand uniform entered, bearing a tray on which was a dainty repast. He placed it on the table, bowed and turned to leave the room.

On seeing the food, the Plumed Knight recovered his strength, and jumping up from his chair, he made for the table.

The butler stopped, his lower jaw dropped and his legs commenced to shake as if he had the ague. He was powerless to move for an instant, so completely frightened was he at seeing the coat of armor moving about as if alive. He recovered himself, and, with one wild yell of terror, dashed from the room, his dignity gone and his face as white as a sheet.

"Mr. Knight," observed Pinkey, his face growing as red as his hair from laughing at the antics of the butler, "you are going to create a sensation when you go out. Did you see Filkins? He won't wait on us for a week. You frightened him out of his wits."



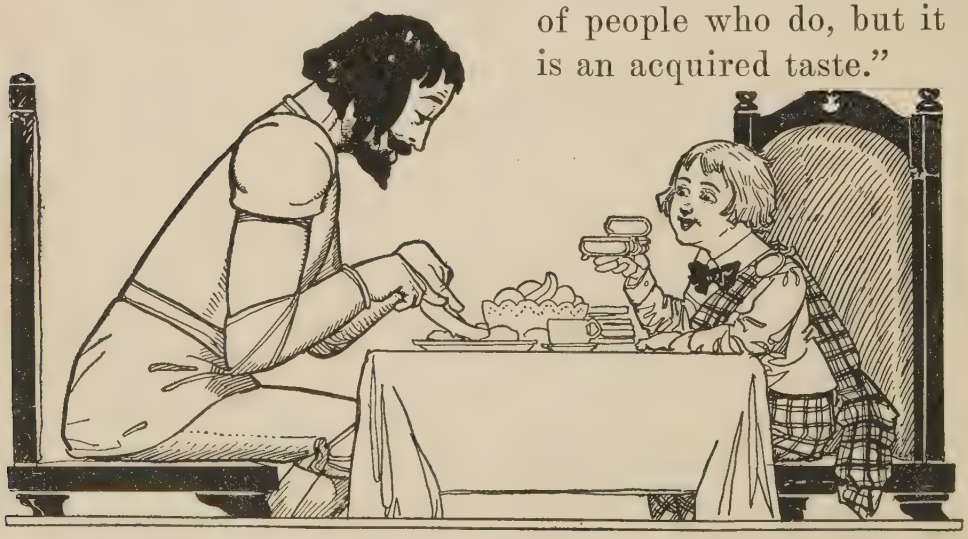
"I don't want to go through this world scaring

people," he mumbled as he gobbled all the sandwiches in sight. "I suppose my clothes are a trifle out of date—m-mum--yum--yum—all I know or care about now is this lunch. It's fine!"

"Have you ever been to Egypt?" Pinkey asked him, as he poured the tea.

"That was before my time—What are those little green things?" and he removed one from his mouth with a wry face.

"Those are olives. Don't you like them? I know lots of people who do, but it is an acquired taste."



"I don't think I care to acquire a taste for them," and he pushed the dish to the other side of the table.

"Where do you think the snuff box came from?" was Pinkey's next question. He was having a hard time in getting the soldier to talk, so busy was he in devouring the food in front of him.

"Couldn't say," he replied between mouthfuls. "Got any old Egyptian relics around here?"

"Yes, there is an Egyptian vase on the table that is very, very old," and he crossed over to it. "Why, the lid is off!" he cried. "I never knew that would come off before."

"So it is!" the Knight agreed, as he rose and examined the vase carefully. "Yes, that is probably where the snuff box came from. It has evidently fallen out and some one has picked it up and placed it in my suit of armor. A lucky coincidence!"

"The maid, perhaps," suggested Pinkey. "Well, whoever it was, they did you a good turn."

"They certainly did," he acknowledged gratefully. "I might still be standing there by the staircase, as dumb as an Egyptian mummy."

"I wish I could go to Egypt and find out what the reward is for returning this snuff box," Pinkey said wistfully.

The Plumed Knight looked up and replied, "Why can't we? We have the snuff and it will do wonderful things. I would like to go to Egypt—it would be an interesting journey."

Pinkey hesitated.

"What would my mama and papa say?" he asked,

"Well, in the first place, I am a soldier, and would protect you from all harm, and you could leave a note telling them you had gone to Egypt."

The whole affair seemed very simple to the Plumed Knight.

"I can see the laird when he reads a note like that," the boy laughed. "Why, before we could reach the coast, he would assemble his regiment and they would overtake and drag us back home!"

"How far are we from the coast?" the Knight asked, as he ate the last sandwich.

"The nearest point is Devil's Neck, and that is nine miles from here."

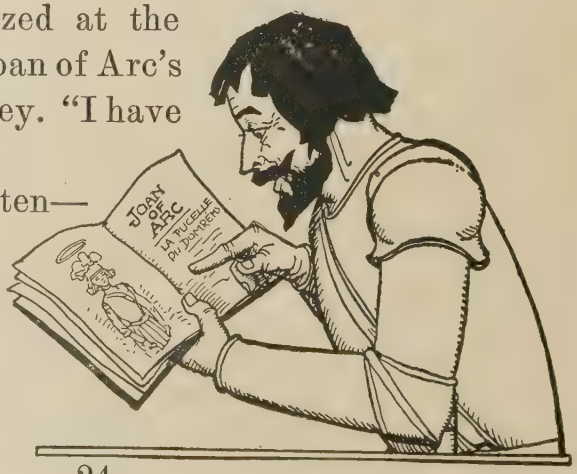
"If we could reach that point, we might get passage on some galley," the stranger suggested thoughtfully.

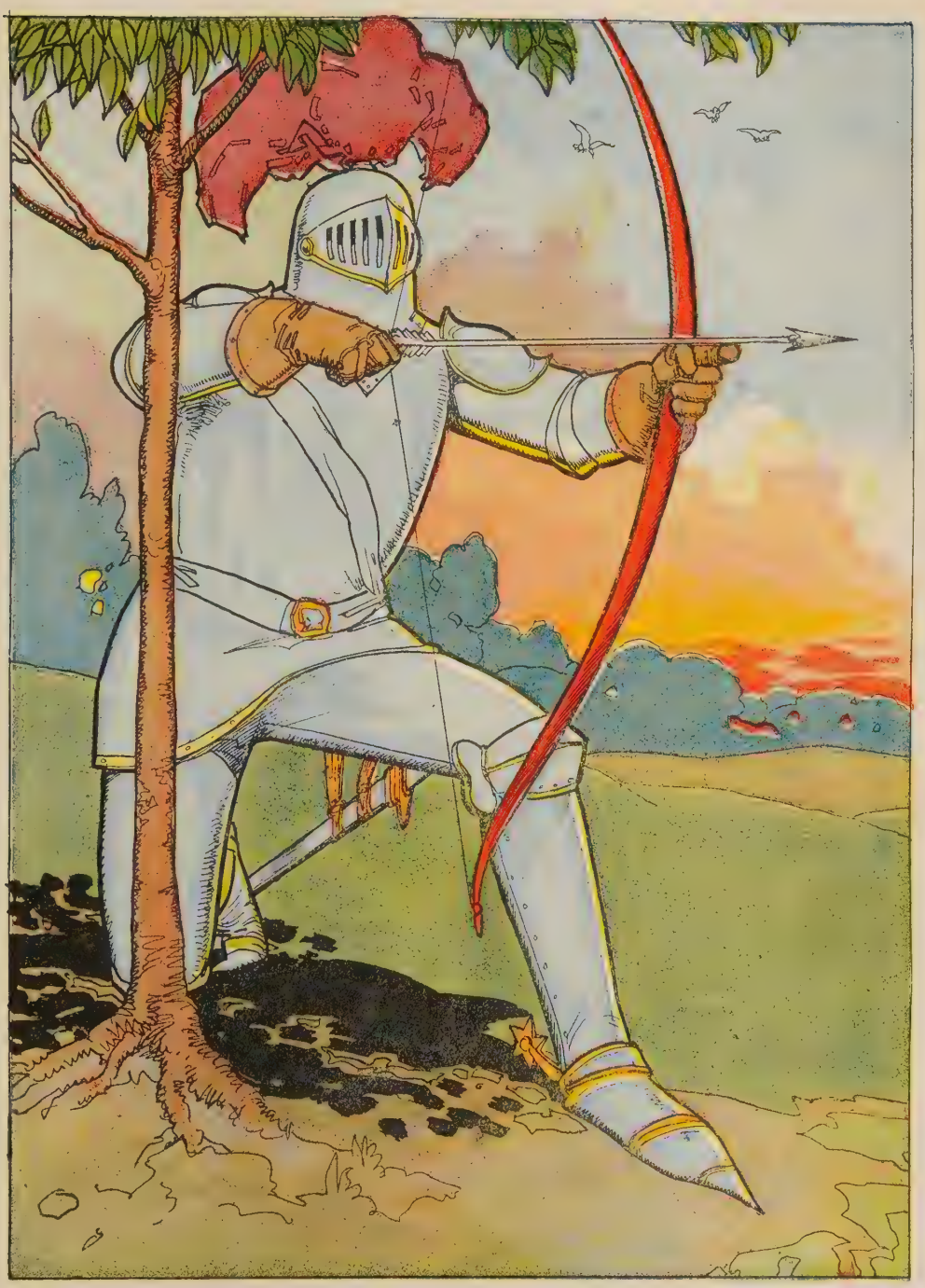
"Galley?" repeated Pinkey, puzzled for a moment. "Oh,—I know, you mean a ship. We have large vessels run by steam now. You have never seen an ocean liner, have you?"

"No, I suppose that is one of the many surprises that is in store for me."

"You will be amazed at the many changes since Joan of Arc's time," continued Pinkey. "I have read about her."

"What? Is it written—her history?" he exclaimed, his eyes gleaming with excitement. "Let me see it, will you?"





The Plumed Knight knelt on one knee and lifted the bow.

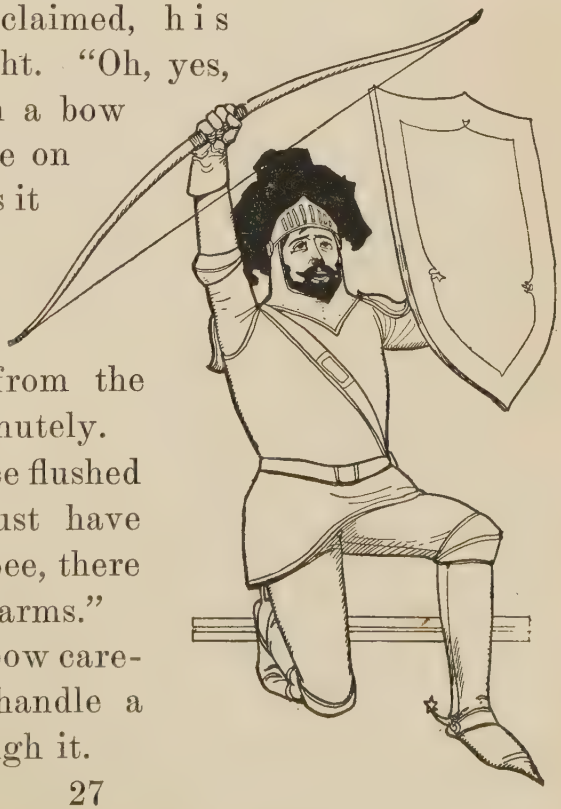
Pinkey took a history from one of the bookshelves and handed it to him.

"Joan of Arc," he read reverently. "Ah — bless her memory, she was an angel! Perhaps my name is in there. I was one of her captains."

"What is your name—I mean, when you were a yeoman?" questioned the boy suddenly. He had forgotten that this strange fellow might have a name.

"Sir John St. Germaine, Knight of the Golden Cross, Captain of Yeomanry, and the champion archer of my day."

"Archer?" Pinkey exclaimed, his brow wrinkled in thought. "Oh, yes, you mean shooting with a bow and arrow. There is one on the wall. My father says it is the only one in this country."



The ex-yeoman took the heavy bow down from the wall and examined it minutely.

"Why," he cried, his face flushed with pleasure, "this must have belonged to our army! See, there is Joan of Arc's coat-of-arms."

Pinkey glanced at the bow carefully and saw on the handle a crown with a cross through it.

"Her coat-of-arms," the soldier murmured loyally. Kneeling on one knee and kissing the bow, he raised it up high and shouted, "Victory!"

Pinkey gazed on these unusual demonstrations with awe.

The warrior quickly rose to his feet and said, "I shall take this with me—that is, with your permission. It will be of more service than the spear," and he slung the lower quiver of pointed steel arrows over his shoulder. "Now I feel at home. Let us go outside and I will show you how I can shoot, but first write your note."

He had assumed the lead and it was very evident that Pinkey would follow him anywhere.

The boy stopped and thought seriously for a moment. He had his parents to think of and a trip to Egypt was not to be passed over lightly.

"I have it!" he suddenly cried, his face lighting up with a smile.

"I will write and say that I have gone to visit my grandfather, who lives in Glasgow. I have often done it, and my father and mother never worry when I am there."

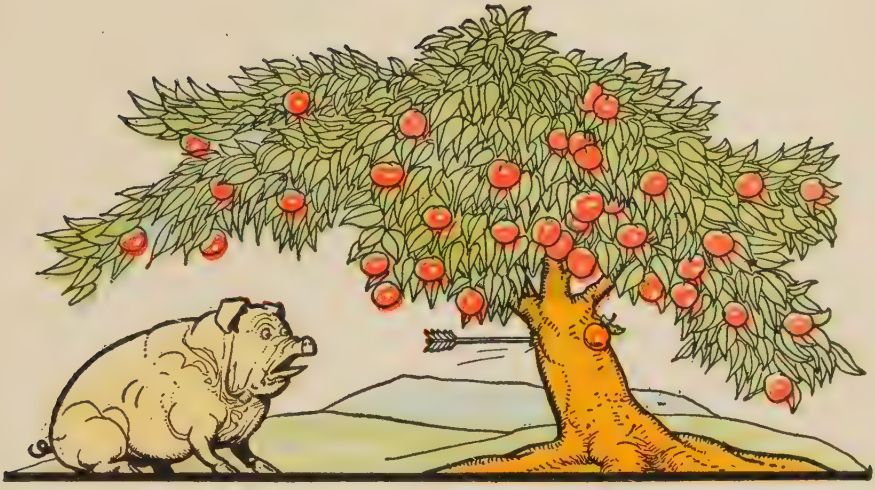
"A grand idea!" exclaimed the Knight delightedly.

Pinkey hurriedly wrote the note and placed it on the table where it could easily be seen.

"Come, let us go," said the soldier in a tone that fascinated Pinkey until his eyes rolled with excitement.

The Plumed Knight placed the snuff box securely in

his steel bosom and, picking up his heavy bow, saluted and marched out of the room, Pinkey following like a little lamb.



CHAPTER TWO

SIR ADOLPHUS PIGTAIL

In the apple orchard on the other side of the stables were hundreds of trees, covered with fragrant pink-and-white apple blossoms. It was spring, and every gentle breeze would blow them to the ground, floating in the air like snow in a snow storm. The odor of the pretty buds was delightful, and so thought an old pig that lay dreaming under a tree.

He seemed to have everything his own way. The day before the laird's overseer had bundled the other pigs into a cart and taken them to market, notwithstanding their squeals of rage and fright.

This pig seemed to have escaped such a terrible fate. He very likely was not fat enough and was left to feed

to his heart's content until his sides showed evidence of many a juicy pork chop.

So the pig was permitted to eat and sleep amid the glorious blossoms, truly a life of luxury for a pig.

As he slumbered this day in the shade of a large tree, caring naught for the hot sunshine of mid-day, he was suddenly startled by a strange noise.

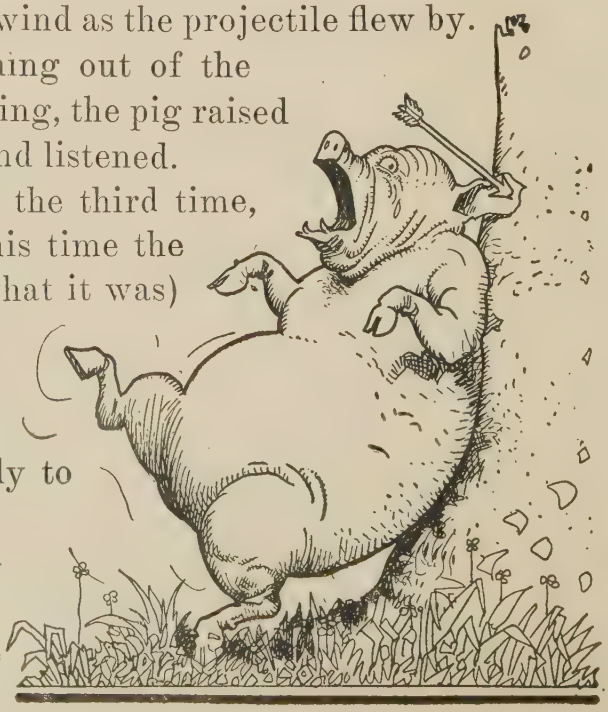
Whizz! and then zip! it went against the tree.

With eyes half opened, he raised himself slightly and looked around. Seeing nothing of an unusual nature, he rolled back on his bed of blossoms and commenced to snore.

Whizz! came the sound and then zip! but this time so close that he felt the wind as the projectile flew by. Positive that something out of the ordinary was happening, the pig raised up on his haunches and listened.

Whizz! was heard the third time, and then zip! but this time the arrow (for that is what it was) passed through his ear and pinned him to the tree, as you would pin a butterfly to a piece of cardboard.

"Weou — wuff — whee!" screeched the animal as it sat there



unable to move. At the least struggle the pain grew more intense.

In a moment the Plumed Knight rushed up and with one quick jerk pulled the arrow out of the pig's ear, which gave a grunt of mingled rage and pain, and sat there as if awaiting an explanation of such outrageous treatment.

Pinkey came running up in alarm, as he thought the archer had done some damage to his father's livestock, and he had, but not of a serious nature; the pig's ear would soon heal.

He laughed, and addressed the soldier, who was putting the arrows back into his quiver.

"You're a sure enough crack archer, but if father saw you do that, he would clap you into jail."

"That was a narrow escape for the animal," he admitted, somewhat upset by the accident, "but how was I to know there was a pig under the tree? I suppose if it could talk, we would receive a tongue lashing for our carelessness."

"Whoever heard of a pig talking?" Pinkey asked, amused at his friend's silly remark.

"Whoever heard of a plumed knight coming to life after being asleep five thousand years?" the man retorted quickly.

"Nobody—I guess," admitted Pinkey, cornered in his argument.

"Very well, then," resumed the warrior, persistently, "if I can become human once more and talk, why can't

this pig do the same thing? now, tell me that."

"Good gracious! You don't mean ———"

"Exactly!" interrupted the ex-yeoman. "I mean the magic snuff, and I am going to test it now," and so saying he drew the box from his bosom.

"Stop!" Pinkey cried in alarm, as he placed his hands on the active soldier's arm. "What in the world would the pig do if it could walk and talk the same as we do?"

"He wouldn't go to market, that's sure," came the convincing reply. "I'm going to experiment," and he sprinkled some snuff on the pig's nose.

The pig opened its mouth wide and then "Ker-choo!" he sneezed violently. Jumping up on his hind legs, he found he was able to walk like a man, and seeing the two staring at him, to the wonder and amazement of both, he exclaimed, "Good morning, friends! It's a beautiful day!"

"Victory!" shouted the exulting soldier. Pinkey was speechless.

The pig remarked, "How strange I feel!" and he rubbed his head. "I am in my own orchard," and he looked around, "but I'm talking and walking the same as you. How did it happen?"

"It's the snuff! The magic snuff!" the Plumed Knight explained. "It brought me to life and we gave you some to see if it would work the second time—and it did."

"I'm very much obliged to you both for your kindness," said the pig politely. "I know Pinkey very well, but I don't remember ever seeing you before. Are you a stranger?"

"Yes, I've been confined to the library for over a hundred years, and goodness knows where I was the other thousands of years, but I must say I am glad to breathe the fresh air and see the sunshine once again." And he inhaled the fragrance of the apple blossoms with ecstasy.

"How is your ear?" inquired Pinkey, solicitously.

"It smarts a little, but otherwise I don't seem to feel any pain," the pig answered as he touched the wounded member gingerly.

"I am glad of that," added the Knight heartily. "It might have been much worse."

"I beg you will not worry over a trifle like that," the pig said. "What I wish to know is what am I to do now?" as he looked from one to the other helplessly.

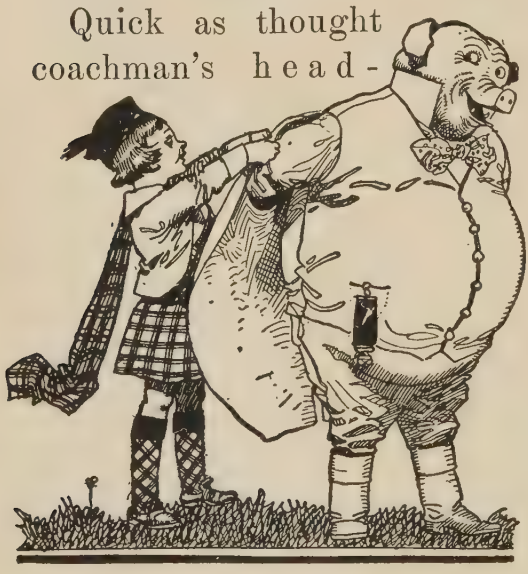
"I was afraid you would be lost in your new condition," Pinkey observed thoughtfully.

"Oh, pshaw!" the Knight declared quickly. "Come right along with us. We are going to Egypt to get the reward that is offered for the return of the magic snuff box, and the more, the merrier."

"But ————" the pig started to object.

"Now don't 'but,' " interrupted the soldier impatiently. "Only goats do that."

"Gracious me!" cried the pig in embarrassment, as he glanced at his feet. "Get me some clothes quick! I can't go around in public looking like this."



Quick as thought Pinkey dashed over to the coachman's head-quarters and returned directly with a full suit of the laird's livery—coat, white breeches, top boots, a stiff hat with cockade on one side, and a red vest and necktie.

"You are very kind," the pig murmured, much pleased with his new clothes, and soon they had him dressed, and there he stood, gorgeous to behold.

"Well, that is the most remarkable change I ever saw," the Knight declared with satisfaction, as he removed his helmet and cooled himself in the shade of the tree.

"What's my name?" inquired the pig, as he stooped to gather a cluster of apple blossoms and fasten them in his buttonhole.

"To be sure, you must have a name," announced the Knight decidedly. "Have you any particular name in

And there he stood, gorgeous to behold.

mind that you fancy?" he asked, with a smile.

"I always admired the name of Adolphus. That was the name of the old ram that used to be here—do you remember him, Pinkey?

Pinkey nodded his head.

"Then," continued the Plumed Knight seriously, "we will christen you Sir Adolphus Pigtail," and he gathered a handful of blossoms and threw them over the pig's head.

"You flatter me," he said, highly honored at the title of Sir they had bestowed upon him. "Now, if I could get fixed up a bit, I would feel like a gentleman. I need a shave badly," and he rubbed the bristles on his chin briskly.

"Shave—shave? What does that mean?" asked the archer curiously. "That's a new one to me."

"Didn't they have barbers in your time?" Pinkey questioned in surprise.

"No, whatever they are," he answered, much puzzled.

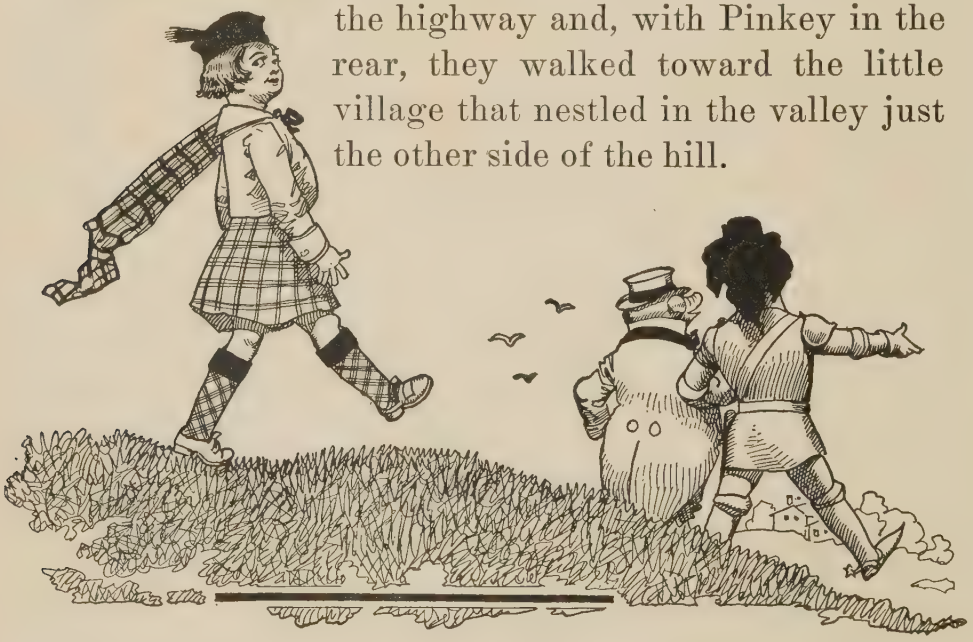
"You must know," explained Sir Adolphus, "that we have a sharp knife called a razor and by applying a lather of soapsuds to the face, a barber will shave off your beard or mustache without hurting you—that is, if he's a good barber," he added.

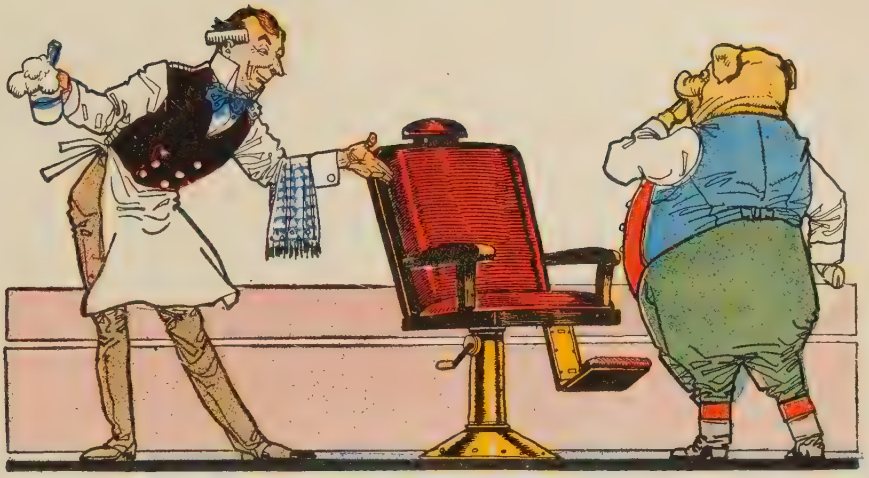
"Good! Let us find a barber at once. I want my beard and mustache shaved off right now. If I am going to travel extensively, I want to look as nice as possible."

"Very well," decided Pinkey, ready to help. "I will

take you to my old friend, Philippe, the village barber, and if he doesn't have a fit when he sees you two odd fellows, I will be disappointed," and he laughed until the tears came to his eyes at his two funny looking friends as they marched out of the orchard arm in arm.

After climbing a low stone wall, they emerged into the highway and, with Pinkey in the rear, they walked toward the little village that nestled in the valley just the other side of the hill.





CHAPTER THREE

PHILIPPE'S NEW CUSTOMERS

In a little shop located near the outskirts of the village lived Philippe, the village barber. His shop was small but neat. On the wall was a mirror and his tools were placed neatly on a table. Chairs were lined against the wall, awaiting customers, and on the opposite side of the room was a shaving chair.

It was a warm day and as Philippe was not busy he sharpened his razors and fussed about the shop, cleaning his tools and putting everything in order.

Philippe was always happy. There were no clouds to obscure the sunshine of his happy nature. As he worked, he whistled and sang:

Barber, barber, shave a pig;
How many hairs have you in your wig?
Four and twenty, that's enough—
Give the poor barber a pinch of snuff.

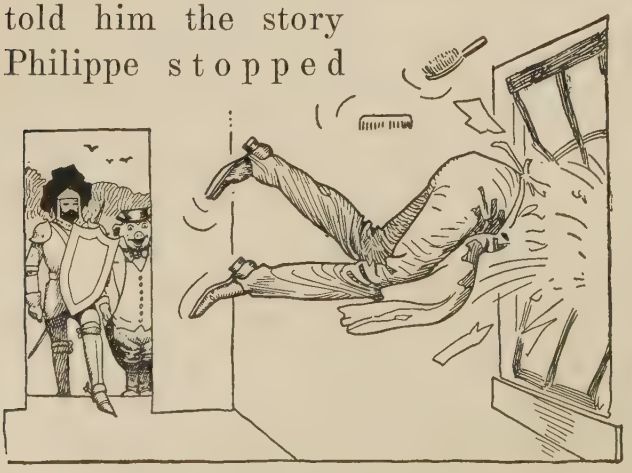
A shadow crossing his doorstep caused him to look up, and the sight that met his gaze was enough to turn his hair white with fright.

His blood almost froze in his veins as he stood there and looked in astonishment and terror at the stylishly dressed pig and the Plumed Knight in a suit of shining armor with its waving plume, his fierce face showing through the open visor.

They were entering the shop!

Philippe took one more look as if to assure himself that he saw correctly, and then with a wild yell he leaped for the window and crashed through it, taking glass, sash and all.

He probably never would have returned had not Pinkey run after him and grasped hold of his coat tails and told him the story as best he could. Philippe stopped running as he knew Pinkey, the son of the great Lord of Dunehurst and with the window sash still about his neck, was induced to return and



meet the two strangers who were waiting to be shaved.

The Plumed Knight had removed his helmet and was examining with interest the oils, pomades, powders and puffs that adorned the table in front of the mirror, while Sir Adolphus, who seemed familiar with the customs of gentlemen, removed his tie from around his fat neck and prepared for his first shave.

"Philippe," said Pinkey, as he led the hesitating barber forward, "I want you to meet my friends, the Plumed Knight, Sir John St. Germaine, Knight of the Golden Cross, Captain of Yeomanry in the army of Joan of Arc, and Sir Adolphus Pigtail of royal descent and a gentleman."

The astonished barber returned their greetings with a low bow.

"These gentlemen wish to be shaved," Pinkey informed him.

"Ah, certainly!" he exclaimed, his professional instincts returning to him. "Which one first?" and he held the apron aloft with a smile on his face. The humor of the situation now appealed to him.

"After you, Sir Knight," said the polite pig. "And while I wait I shall peruse the livestock reports," and he picked up a newspaper and started to read.

"Well, I never!" gasped Pinkey in astonishment as he looked at the pig. "He is educated and can read! I wonder where he went to school."

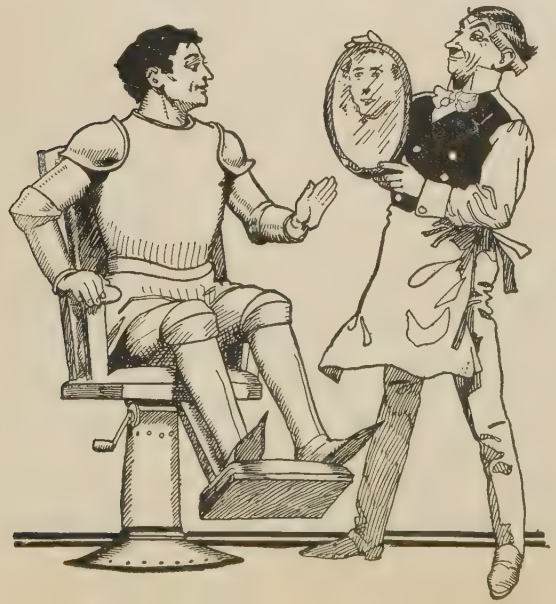
"Pork is up," read Sir Adolphus, re-adjusting his eye-

glasses, which he had found in the pocket of his vest. "It's a good thing I left the orchard to-day. I'll bet twelve pounds of sausage that overseer will look for me to-morrow."

"He'll have a good hunt," laughed Pinkey. He could see in his mind's eye the overseer peering under every tree for the pig so he could take him to market.

"Next!" called Philippe, as he deftly removed the apron from around the Knight's neck.

Pinkey turned and was astonished at the remarkable change that had taken place in the Plumed Knight's appearance. He was now a handsome young man with a smooth, fair skin, and his eyes were blue. His hair had been trimmed and Pinkey liked his friend's looks much better. His heart warmed to the brave soldier of so many battles, who now seemed to be a young man of about thirty years.



Sir Adolphus sat down in the chair and gave a grunt of satisfaction as Philippe covered his fat cheeks with a sweet-smelling lather.

The Knight glanced at himself quickly in the mirror, and, feeling satisfied with his

altered appearance, sat down in one of the chairs, tilted it back against the wall, and was soon deeply interested in the volume of history Pinkey had given to him. As he turned the pages, he seemed greatly pleased at its contents.

Suddenly his face brightened with joy, and he sprang to his feet excitedly.

"Look! See!" he cried, as he rushed to Pinkey and held the open book out for him to read.

Pinkey took the history and read aloud:

"And at that moment, when the City of Orleans was within her grasp, Joan of Arc summoned her brave captain of yeomanry, John St. Germaine, and with her sword then and there made him a Knight of the Golden Cross. It was a great victory and she was hailed as a divine leader."

"What do you think of that?" he exclaimed, his face flushed with pride.

"Sir John, you are a brave man, and I am proud to know you," said Pinkey loyally as he grasped his hand.

"Eh—what's that?" grunted Sir Adolphus, who had dozed off at Philippe's gentle touch.

Pinkey re-read the passage, and the pig murmured his approval just in time to get a mouthful of soapsuds.

As Philippe gathered up his tools, he inquired where they were bound for.

Pinkey explained more fully the events of the day, and told him they were going to Egypt to get the wonderful

reward offered for the return of the snuff box.

"Won't you join us in our Egyptian expedition?" asked the Plumed Knight as he replaced the helmet on his head.

"Yes, do come along," suggested Pinkey enthusiastically. "It will be a wonderful trip and we will share the reward with you. We think it is worth going for."

Philippe pondered and wrinkled his brow in thought.

"Yes, it will be a wonderful trip, but what about my customers?"

"Close your shop until you get back," advised the soldier, "although methinks you won't have to work when you return."

"You will be most welcome," said the polite pig to the barber, "and then we can be shaved every day," he added to himself.

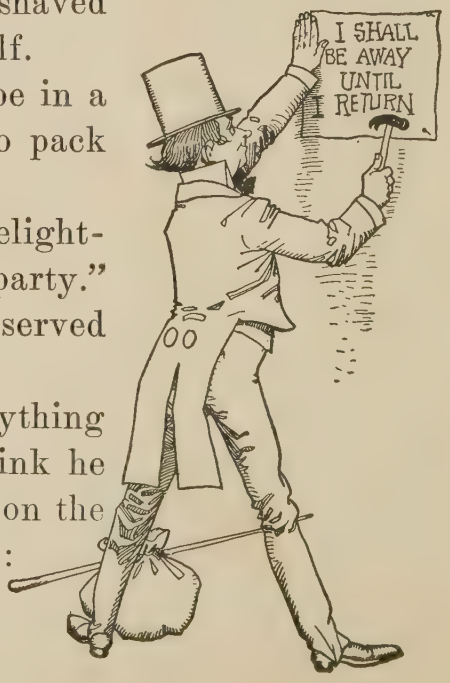
"I will go," agreed Philippe in a moment, and he proceeded to pack his tools.

"Hurrah!" cried Pinkey, delightedly. "We shall have quite a party."

"Sort of a Cook's tour," observed the matter-of-fact pig.

The barber hastily put everything in order, and with pen and ink he made a sign which he tacked on the door of the little shop. It read:

"I shall be away until I return."

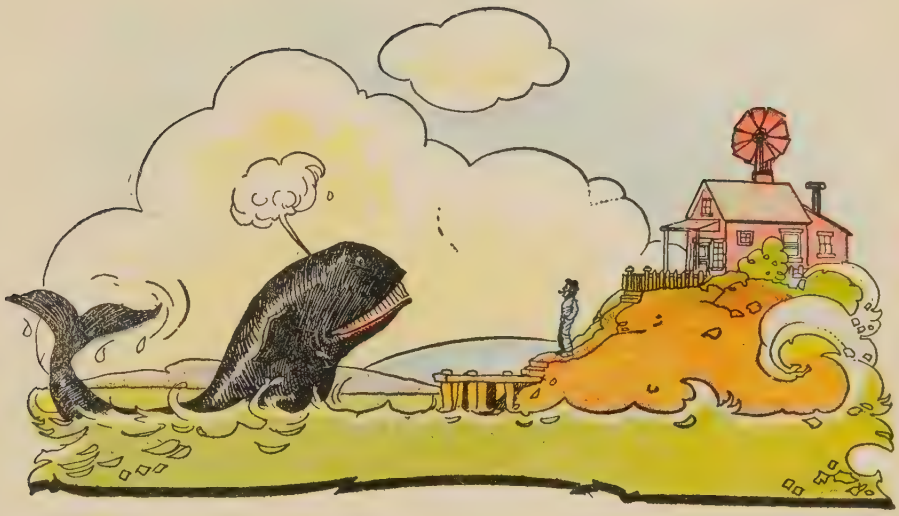


"Ah, certainly!" he exclaimed. "Which one first?"

They all laughed heartily at his funny sign, and then he locked the door, shouldered his bundle, and they started on their journey to the coast, to find some departing vessel that would take them to Egypt.

As it was mid-day and the sun very hot, the people of the town were not about as much as usual, but those who did see the little son of the great Laird of Dunehurst and his strange companions closed their windows with a bang or ran screeching into their houses and locked and bolted the doors.

They certainly were an odd party, as they walked gaily along the highway, laughing and talking and not one whit afraid of the many adventures that lay before them.



CHAPTER FOUR

SANDY McPHERSON'S WHALE SCHOOL

On the coast of the Atlantic Ocean, nestling in the bay that was formed by a rocky piece of land called the "Devil's Neck" was a fisherman's cottage—small but neat. The little garden in front boasted of a few flowers, a gravel walk lined with conch shells led to the front doorway, and the white fence that enclosed the yard completed the picturesque home.

Here the fisherman lived all alone. He had no kith or kin and made his living by his nets and lobster traps. But recently he had discovered a way to make a fortune much quicker and easier than by fishing.

Every spring for the last five years hundreds of whales were in the habit of swimming into the bay. Here they

would rest and feed, rearing their young, and growing fatter each year. It was a wonderful sight to see them as they launched their huge bodies into the air, falling back into the ocean with a loud splash.

Sandy had watched them carefully each year and as they were sperm-whales he knew there were hundreds of barrels of valuable oil in their massive bodies, but how to obtain it was the question that had bothered him. Well he knew if there was some way to get this oil it would make him a rich man.

He had given the matter much thought and one day he solved the problem.

Knowing that their food was chiefly mollusks and shell-fish, he built a large basin inshore where the whale food was the most plentiful and enclosed it with a large gate that was worked by a heavy lever, dropping it into the water like the gates of the locks on a canal.

When the whales would enter the enclosure to feed, Sandy would lower the gate, preventing them from returning to deep water until he wished. Then with a long, sharp, steel tube that

was connected to a hand pump on shore by a long hose, he would insert it into the whale's blubber, which is the fatty portion of the body, and all he had to do was to

pump the valuable oil until the whale was empty, filling barrel after barrel.

"Sandy McPherson's Whale School" he called it, for it was not very long before the sea monsters grew to be quite docile and would enter the basin and feed contentedly until they were pumped dry.

On this particular morning he had just dropped the gate on his largest and fattest whale. He smoked a short, black pipe and blew clouds of smoke about him as he pumped and dreamt of the money he was making.

Pausing to rest his back, and looking up, he saw some strange people approaching. So odd and curious were they that he removed his pipe from his mouth and stood in astonishment, unable to move.

Two of them seemed to be ordinary people. They were Pinkey and Philippe, but the sight of the Plumed Knight

and Sir Adolphus Pigtail made the old fisherman's eyes almost pop out of their sockets.

"Good-morning, sir," said Pinkey, stepping forward as spokesman for his friends.

"M—mornin'," stammered Sandy, his eyes still on the pig and the Knight.

"Can you direct us to the nearest point where we can secure passage on some small vessel?"

"Where might ye and yer party be a-goin'?" the old man asked, finally recovering from his surprise.

"Egypt," the boy answered in a matter-of-fact tone.

"Egypt?" gasped Sandy in astonishment, and then he burst out laughing. "Why, young man, that is so far from here that you would have to bore through the earth to reach it."

"Don't vessels go there?" he asked eagerly.

"To be sure. From Glasgow ye could get passage, but ———"

"Excuse me," interrupted Sir Adolphus, stepping forward and speaking to Pinkey. "It might be well to introduce us to this man. He thinks we're a menagerie, and I don't like to be called that."

On hearing the pig talk, Sandy backed away in terror.

Pinkey smiled and inquired, "What's your name, my good man?"

"Sandy McPherson," he managed to reply, scratching his head in bewilderment.

"Mr. McPherson, I am Pinkey McGregor, son of the Lord of Dunehurst. This is Sir Adolphus Pigtail and Sir John St. Germaine, Knight of the Golden Cross and Captain of Yeomanry in the army of Joan of Arc—and this gentleman" (pointing to the barber) "is Philippe, the village barber, and all speak very highly of his work."

"Pleased to meet ye," acknowledged Sandy, as he recognized the importance of Pinkey's name. "Yer friends are very extraordinary, to say the least. I never saw a pig walk and talk like that before, and yer friend boxed up like a sardine in a tin can looks to be a hundred years old."

"I'm over three thousand years old," the Plumed Knight promptly informed him.

"Crazy—crazy—they are all crazy," the old man murmured to himself, as he thought seriously of calling for

help. And he had reason for the thought.

Pinkey, overhearing his observation, smiled and said, "No, Mr. McPherson, we are not crazy, but we have a very important journey before us, and as we do seem to be rather strange, I don't mind telling you how it happened."

He straightway told the grizzled old fisherman about the marvelous snuff box and why they were there.

"Wunnerful—wunnerful!" he exclaimed as he relit his pipe. "Sounds like a fairy story, doesn't it?"

"Yes, indeed," admitted Pinkey. "We have had hard work making people believe our story, but seeing is believing."

"Ye're right, sonny; seein' is believin', and if anyone had told me what I had seen to-day, I would have said they were luny, sure."

"What are you doing here?" inquired Sir Adolphus, as he looked down into the basin and saw the whale wriggling his tail and feeding quietly.

"Pumpin' oil."

"Pumping oil?" they echoed in astonishment.

"Yep, these are my whales," and he pointed to the numerous gray bodies that floated about in the bay. "Sandy McPherson's Whale School, oil pumped while you wait," and the fisherman grinned at them with satisfaction.

"Well, I declare!" ejaculated Pinkey, his eyes open wide. "That is the strangest thing I ever saw. Are they

"M – mornin'," stammered Sandy.

alive? Really and truly live whales?"

"Alive? Of course they're alive! I should say so! They swim in here while I pump them out and then they go back in the bay and get another load."

"Never heard of such a thing," the Plumed Knight declared emphatically. "What do you do with the oil?"

"Sell it to fill lamps, grease engines and sewin'-machines, for ointment and thousands of other things."

"Marvelous!" cried Philippe as he looked in the barrels that were filled. "This is a day of wonders, to be sure! First I see my friends here, who burst in on me and nearly frighten me out of my wits, and now I see a whole school of whales being pumped for oil."

"How far is Glasgow from here?" Pinkey asked the fisherman. "We must get passage for Egypt."

"Twenty-two miles," was the reply, "and it is a long walk."

"I am very tired," Sir Adolphus informed his companions, as he sat down wearily on an empty barrel. "I wish I didn't have to go any farther. You know I am somewhat stout and I can't stand much exertion," and he fanned himself with his hat.

"You might jump on one of my whales and sail over," said Sandy jokingly.

"Stop!" cried the Knight, jumping to his feet. "I have an idea—the magic snuff box!" and he took it out of his steel jacket. "This will make the whale talk and understand."

"Aw, get out!" retorted the old fisherman incredulously. "Whoever heard of such a thing?"

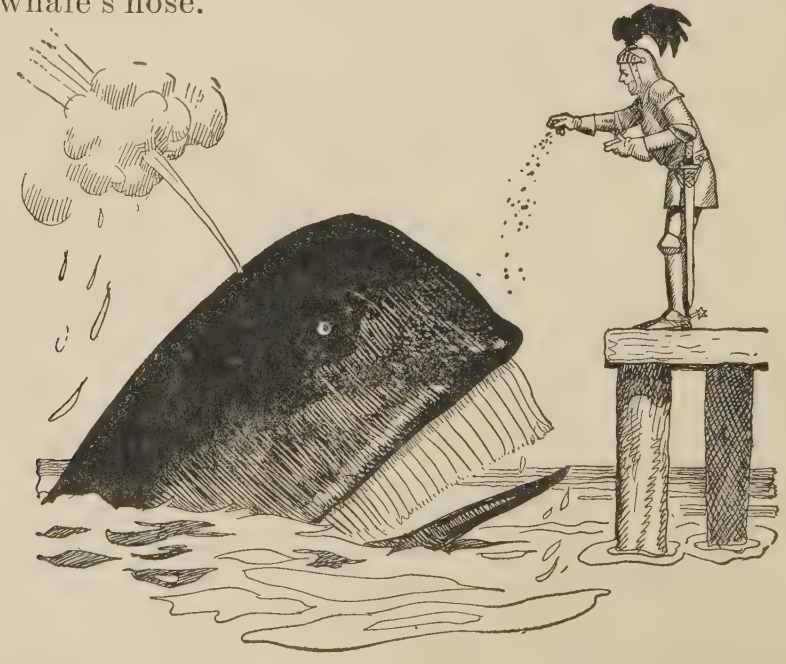
Pinkey pointed significantly to his two friends as if to say, "Seeing is believing."

"Um—er, it might be as you say," he was forced to admit.

"We can try it," suggested Sir Adolphus, who had faith in its power and well he might. "It saved me from the market."

"No harm in tryin'," repeated Sandy as he rubbed his beard thoughtfully.

The Knight went quickly to the edge of the enclosure and, without hesitating, sprinkled some of the snuff on the whale's nose.



Splash—bubble—swhoosh, and a spray of water was blown into the air for thirty feet. The whale had sneezed!

"Here, what are you fellows trying to do?" he bellowed as he shook himself.

"Great lobsters!" yelled Sandy as he staggered back in amazement. "Yer did it! Yer did it! Wunnerful—wunnerful!" and his face grew red with excitement.

Pinkey laughed at the queer expression on Sandy's face and asked, "What are we to do now? We can't stay on the whale's back—it's too slippery."

"Build a cabin," suggested Sir Adolphus, who was always quick to grasp the situation.

"The very thing!" agreed Sir John, "but how?"

Pinkey looked around and spied a little summer house in Sandy's side yard. It was an octagon in shape, with railings all around, a seat inside, and a substantial top supported by posts. A small flag pole on top held a gay little flag, that whipped in the breeze.

"Can't we fasten that pagoda on the whale's back in some way?" he inquired of Sandy.

"Of course ye can," replied the now enthusiastic fisherman. "I have some chains that we can wind around the whale's body," and he hurried to a shed near by, soon returning, and dragging a long anchor chain with him.

"The very thing," Philippe cried, as he saw what Sandy intended to do.

"Hurrah!" shouted Pinkey in his boyish way, and they all started to work.

First they carried the summer house over to the edge of the water and placed in on the whale's back.

"Stop that!" the whale complained as he felt the weight of the house on his back. "You're taking too many liberties with me on such short acquaintance."

"You hush up," commanded Sandy, as he looked down at the whale, "I'm your boss and you are to do as I tell ye, and don't talk back."

"All right, Sandy," the whale returned meekly and went on feeding.

They wound the chain around the whale's body several times, and soon the house was firmly fastened. It looked like a pagoda on an elephant.

"Looks like a handy craft," remarked the fat pig as he mopped his face and replaced his eye-glass in his eye.

"Now for provisions," and the fisherman dashed into the house.

They helped him carry tinned biscuits, canned chicken, ham, and also an oil stove to the basin.

"This will come in handy," Sandy observed, as he placed the stove in one corner of the cabin, "and we

will carry our own fuel with us. That whale is full of oil."

"Very thoughtful of you," murmured Sir Adolphus gratefully. "This craft looks like a steam launch."

"That 'er whaler has more steam to the square inch than any steam launch you ever saw. Just wait until he starts full speed," and he set a water cask in the shady corner of the cabin.

"Are you going with us?" intimated the Plumed Knight, who had taken quite a liking to the gruff fisherman.

"What? And leave my Whale School? Not much! But I'm much obliged for the invitation," he added.

"Mr. McPherson," and the ex-yeoman addressed the fisherman seriously, "what money you can make here by pumping oil is but a drop in the bucket compared to the treasure that this snuff box will bring you as a reward. Egypt undoubtedly is mourning the loss of this wonderful snuff, and I am sure it will pay you to join us."

"Yes," continued Pinkey, anxious to have him go, "whatever the reward may be, it is to be divided equally among us. Better go along."

"I also add a cordial invita-

tion," Sir Adolphus added quickly with his best bow.

"Me, too," chimed in Philippe, not to be outdone by the Chesterfieldian pig.

Sandy hesitated and scratched his head. "It's taking a long chance, but you fellows have got something wunnerful in that 'er snuff box, so I'll accept your invitation and go. Besides, I have sailed the seas for forty years, and you'll need me to boss this whale."

"Good!" ejaculated the Knight with satisfaction, as Sandy hurried into the house for his maps and compass.

On returning with his chest of tools and placing them on board, he said with a laugh, "We ought to name this craft. Let us call it the Cupid. That was the name of my last boat."

"All right," Pinkey agreed quickly.

"A very pretty name for such a trim ship," decided the pig agreeably.

"This craft looks to me like a submarine," said Philippe, as he looked at the whale's smooth sides.

"What is a submarine?" quickly asked the Plumed Knight, always eager for information.

"It's a boat that sails under water and it can float or dive like a fish. It is used to sink war vessels."

"And are we going to sail under water?" Sir John inquired in alarm.

"I should say not!" was Sandy's rejoinder. "Here, you," and he leaned over and addressed the whale.

"Are you talking to me?" he asked, his large mouth

full of shell-fish, a delicacy he greatly relished.

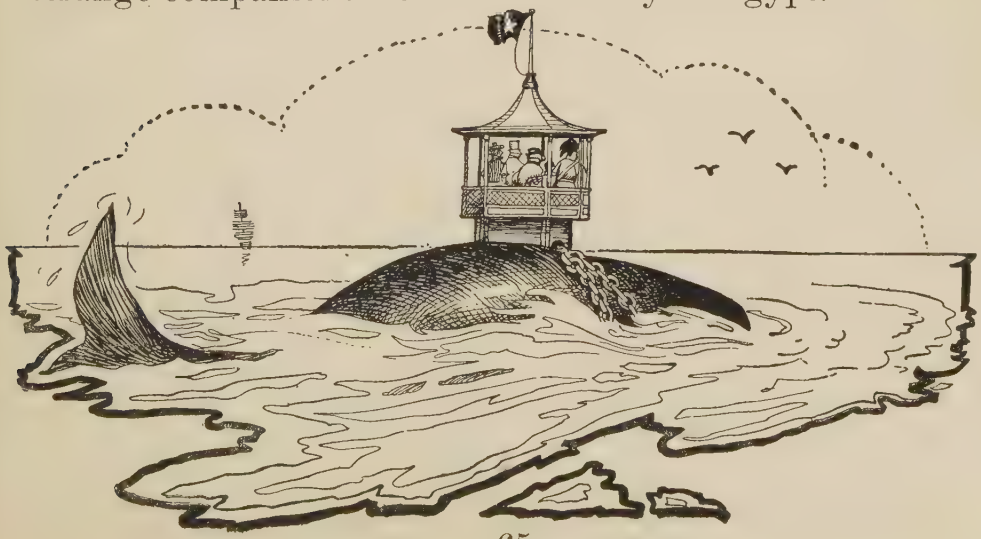
"Yes, I am talking to you," the old man answered. "Yer name is Cupid, understand? And ye're not to dive or cut any monkeyshines on the sea. Remember, we are on yer back and ye're to float and obey me."

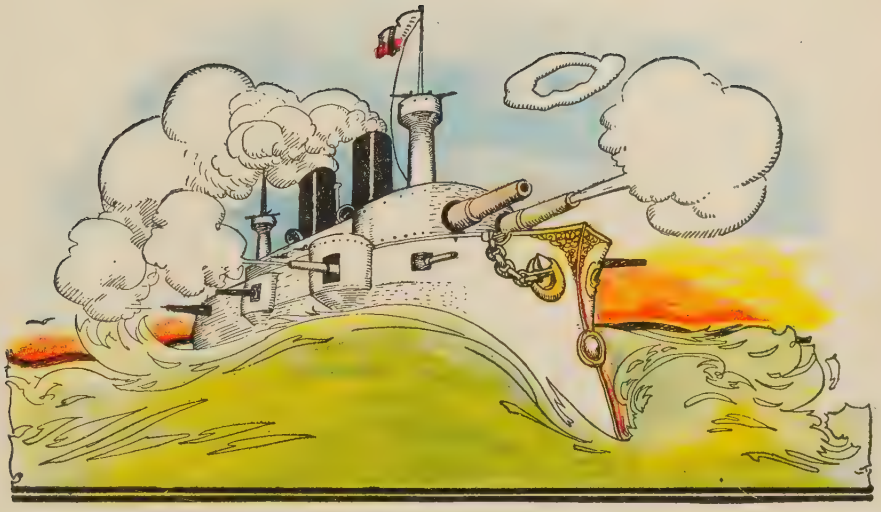
"All right, captain," was the monster's reply.

"All aboard!" cried the captain of the Cupid, as he raised the water gate. "All aboard for Egypt!" and jumped on deck as the whale started to back out from the basin, blowing a jet of water into the air, the same as a boat blows its whistle when leaving the dock.

"Where to, captain?" the accommodating whale asked.

"You steer sou' by sou'-east until I tells yer to stop," Sandy commanded and the whale turned its nose to the open sea, and soon they were gliding swiftly along, the spray flying about them, and at last Pinkey and his strange companions were on their way to Egypt.





CHAPTER FIVE

THE "CUPID" MEETS DISASTER

On they went, Pinkey and his friends, enjoying the ocean breezes, and as the sea was smooth, the whale skimmed over the water so fast that the waves almost washed over the deck of the cabin. A long trail of white foam behind them showed their speed and Sandy had to admit that the Cupid was going faster than any boat he had ever seen.

Sea gulls flew over their heads and gazed down upon them curiously and now and then they could see a shark following behind, waiting for scraps of food that might be thrown overboard.

"At this rate," Captain Sandy informed them, "we

ought to reach the River Nile in three days. We're goin' as fast as an express train."

The first and second days were uneventful. They noticed one or two vessels in the distance, but they passed out of sight.

The weather was perfect, and the whale maintained a terrific speed with ease, and even offered to double it. The passengers raised a storm of protest as it was almost impossible for them to breathe.

On the third night out, they were grouped about in comfortable attitudes, Sandy McPherson smoking his pipe serenely and the others watching the moon rise in all its glory.

Suddenly Sir Adolphus spied a tiny red light far away to their left, then another and another. He called Sandy's attention to it.

"Strange," the skipper murmured as he adjusted the spy-glass, "that there should be so many lights. They seem to be on a dozen vessels, one following the other."

"Perhaps they are the Russian or the Japanese fleet," suggested Pinkey, who had followed the maneuvers in the Russo-Japanese war with interest.

"Mebbe so," admitted Sandy thoughtfully,

and sure enough, they saw in a few moments the funnels and turrets of a fleet of battleships.

Philippe counted eight of them.

"They're cruisers, all right," said Pinkey, who had been looking at them intently through the glass.

The moon would pass behind a cloud, bathing everything around them in inky blackness, but when it would appear again the war vessels could be seen plainly.

"Now I'll have a chance to see what a modern fighting ship is," the Plumed Knight declared, his face lighting with pleasure.

"Perhaps it would be well for us to steer off," the wise pig said, with a nod of his head. "They may take us for a submarine."

He had scarcely spoken when the moon came out, and covered the ocean with its white, silvery light.

Instantly there was a flash from the side of one of the vessels, and then—Boom! came the late report of a thirteen-inch gun.

"Jumping crab shells!" yelled Sandy, starting to his feet in astonishment. "Pigtail, you're right! They're firing on us! Here, Cupid," he called to the whale, "steer east by sou'-east."

The whale, quick to obey, turned in its course, and dashed away at right angles. Splash! went the shell behind them.

"Pretty good shot for night time," observed Sir Adolphus calmly.

Splash—Boom! went another gun and then Crack—Crash! the entire fleet opened on them. By this time the vessels had spread out in a semi-circle and the shells were dropping around them like hailstones.

"This is getting too hot for us!" shouted the skipper. "Go it, Cupid," he bawled to the whale, his beard bristling with excitement.

"We'll make it," the Plumed Knight called, but his words were snatched from his mouth and whirled to the winds. They looked back at their foremost pursuer as it steamed toward them. Great clouds of smoke were belching from the funnels and the spray flew high into the air as it ploughed through the water. The others were following.

"We'll beat 'em yet!" cried the captain, as he looked back at the enemy, but no one heard him.

The wind whistled about their ears and whipped the words out of their mouths almost before they were spoken. The Cupid was going like a race horse.

The passengers were badly frightened by this time, and things began to look serious. Every time a shot was fired, it came closer and closer. The gunners were getting the range.

Splash—Chug! went the shells about them. Whizz—Whirr! they went overhead.

Boom! went another gun and in a moment the whale careened to one side, almost tipping the occupants of the summer house into the ocean.

"I'm struck!" bellowed the whale in agony, as it shuddered and floated about helplessly.

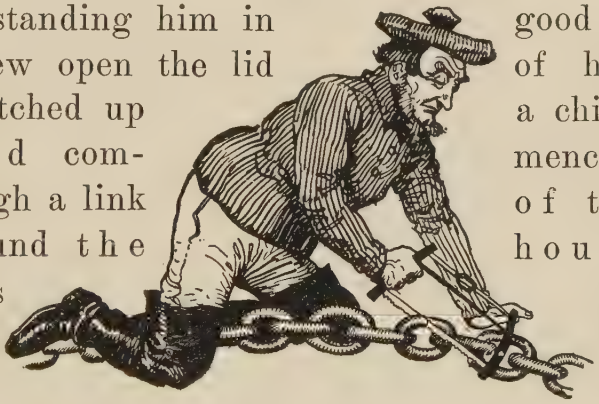
"We're done for!" cried Philippe, as he wrung his hands in despair.

"What are our chances?" asked Sandy of the whale.

"I can't hold out much longer," it answered faintly.

Pinkey and the others looked over the side of the cabin and there in the poor whale's body was a large hole where the shot had struck.

"All hands on deck!" bawled Sandy, his nautical experience standing him in good stead.



He threw open the lid of his tool chest, snatched up a chilled-steel saw and commenced sawing through a link of the chain that bound the house to the whale's back.

"If we can cut loose before Cupid sinks," he gasped between breaths, "we'll float anyhow," and he worked the saw vigorously.

The others were now thoroughly frightened, for they realized that if the whale sunk, cabin and all, they would be thrown into the sea and drowned. They gathered around the busy fisherman helplessly, their faces white with terror, and watched him saw through the chain inch by inch.

It was a serious moment, and it looked as if their

journey was going to end disastrously right there.

The whale rolled on the heavy swells like a water-logged vessel, and by this time the gunboats had thrown their searchlights on the scene, confident that they had disabled the submarine, for that was what they took the strange craft to be.

Snap! went the link, and it was but the work of a moment to toss the ends of the chain overboard. Just as the little summer house tilted to one side and started to slip over, the whale with a bellow sank beneath them.

The house settled into the water and floated on the waves like a raft.

The cruisers, seeing their work completed, put out their searchlights, again formed in line and steamed slowly away toward the west, disappearing over the horizon and leaving the passengers of the Cupid, or what was left of it, alone on the sea and at the mercy of the waves and wind.

CHAPTER SIX

THE MERMAIDS TO THE RESCUE

The sun arose on the scene and the next day had arrived. Luckily for the occupants of the floating raft, the weather was mild, and as they rose and fell on the long swells, it was not so unpleasant as might be imagined.

The possibility of a storm blowing up was all that worried them. Their food and water supply was plentiful, and they were comfortably sheltered from the sun.

No sign of the war vessels was seen, and the whale had disappeared.

"Poor Cupid," sighed Pinkey mournfully. "To think the only whale that could talk was sunk by a submarine!"

"It is too bad," assented Sir Adolphus Pigtail, as he

wiped a tear from his eye; "he was a wonderful animal."

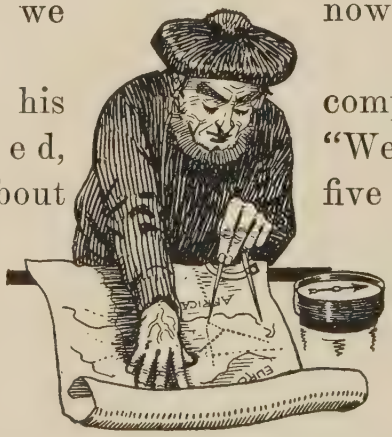
"Well, here we are," said Sandy, his mind seriously occupied with the present predicament, "afloat like three men in a tub. I wish I could rig up a sail! We'll make no headway bobbin' about like this."

"Our only chance, it seems to me, is to be picked up by some passing ship," Philippe declared, as he scanned the horizon anxiously.

"If it blows up a storm, we won't last an hour," added the Plumed Knight.

"Ye're right," agreed the skipper with a grim smile. "This craft is far from a sea-goin' tug, that's sure."

"Where are we now?" Pinkey asked him.



He looked at his compass and map, then replied, "We're in the Mediterranean Sea, about five hundred miles from the coast of Africa. If we could reach land, I'd be willin' to take a chance by walkin' to the Nile, across the desert."

"Can't you do something?" again questioned Pinkey of the fisherman, helplessly.

"Nary a thing," was his reply. "We haven't a stitch of canvas for a sail. Who'd a thought those clumsy landlubbers would take us for a submarine and sink us? It's scandalous, that's what it is!"

"I'd like to give them a piece of my mind," Sir Adolphus declared positively.

"The damage is done, so let us face the situation with a stout heart," announced the Plumed Knight bravely.

"That's just what we're a-doin'," the old man retorted grimly, "but we don't seem to be makin' much headway."

Pinkey, who had been gazing out across the water, suddenly jumped to his feet and cried, "I see a shark!"

They all turned in the direction of his pointed finger and Sandy, after giving one look, turned tail and shouted, "Shark nothin'! Great fish scales, it's a mermaid as sure as I am a foot high!"

"A mermaid?" they repeated after him, but before they could say another word a girlish figure had appeared on the surface of the water, shook the spray from her eyes, and looked at them for a moment and laughed.

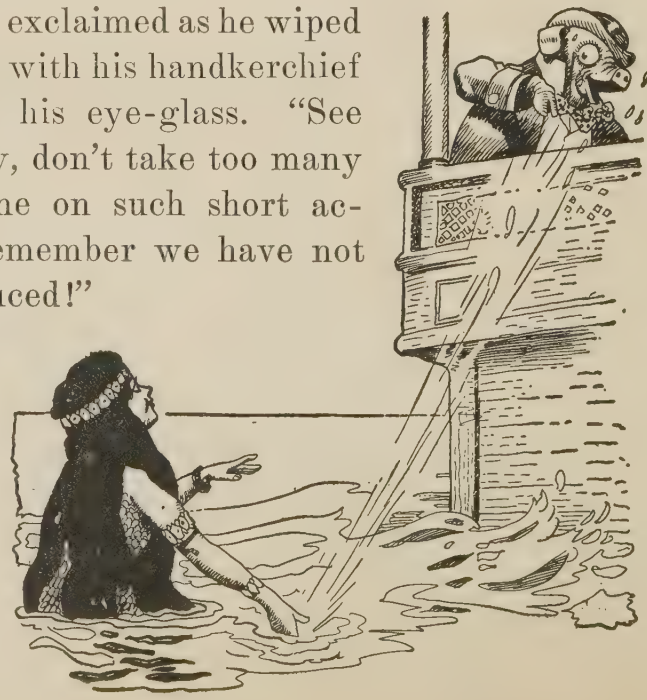
Her face was so pretty and her hair so luxurious that it enveloped her form like a cloak, and she carried a long conch shell that was evidently used as a horn.

"A mermaid!" gasped Pinkey, his eyes open wide at such a marvelous sight. "I never knew they were alive!"

"Neither did I until just now," assented Sandy, and he blew a cloud of smoke from his black pipe nervously, "but this one is alive, or I am no skipper."

The mermaid swam around the craft and floated gracefully on the waves, looking at them curiously. She smiled at them, showing her pearly white teeth and then, growing bolder, approached the raft and merrily dashed some water over Sir Adolphus.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed as he wiped off the dampness with his handkerchief and re-adjusted his eye-glass. "See here, young lady, don't take too many liberties with me on such short acquaintance. Remember we have not yet been introduced!"



As she dashed closer to them, they noticed she was formed like a girl to the waist, the rest of her body tap-

ering into a long tail like that of a fish, and covered with brilliantly colored scales that sparkled in the sunlight.

Upon hearing Sir Adolphus talk, she arched her pretty eye-brows in surprise and said, "Oh, can you talk the same as I?"

"Well, I declare!" ejaculated Pinkey, as much surprised as she was. "Can you talk the same as we do?"

"Of course, I can," she admitted, as she gracefully combed her hair. "Who are you strange people, anyway?"

"Well," interrupted Sandy with a smile, " I don't mind telling you that we are a band of shipwrecked mariners on our way to Egypt—and a long way from it, too."

"We heard the sound of heavy guns and were almost afraid to come to the surface," she informed them prettily.

"We?" repeated the surprised Philippe.

"Yes, I and my sisters," she answered, as if they ought to know.

"Where are they now?" questioned Sir Adolphus, much interested.

"Under water. I'll call them now that the noise is over."

She blew on her shell horn and in a few moments the surface of the ocean was broken by splashes, bubbles and ripples and one by one some fifty mermaids burst into view from the briny deep. Some had dark hair

and some had light, but they were all formed alike and seemed to enjoy swimming and splashing around in the cool, blue water.

"Well, of all things!" the Plumed Knight murmured, removing his helmet to get a better view. "We seem to have struck a ladies' marine seminary."

The passengers of the late Cupid were amazed beyond expression. It certainly was a wonderful sight, and finally Sandy was able to say, "I must be dreamin'! Whoever heard of such a thing?"

"It's marvelous! This beats anything I've ever seen," exclaimed Philippe, whose eyes were shining with excitement.

"What's your name?" inquired Pinkey of the first girl.

"I'm Flo-Flo, the water fairy," she replied amiably, "and these are my sisters."

"Any brothers?" asked Sir Adolphus, who seemed to be interested in her family history.

"No brothers—we live by ourselves on Coral Island."

"Island—island? Is there an island around here?" eagerly inquired Sandy.

"Yes, it is near here. We never go far from home."

"I'd like to reach it with this floating derelict," he continued wistfully.

"Nothing easier," she returned. "We will take you there."

"How?" was Sandy's incredulous inquiry.

"I will show you. Come, girls!" she called, and before

the old fisherman could tell his name, they had gathered around the summerhouse and were pulling and pushing them through the water at a good speed.

Sandy's face relaxed into a broad grin.

"I've sailed in many a strange craft," he remarked to the others, "but this is the first time I was ever pushed across the ocean in a summerhouse by a crew of mermaids."

"It's a very pretty way of traveling," observed the Plumed Knight, glancing at the girls in admiration.

Pinkey suddenly turned to Sandy and inquired, "Where are they taking us?"

"To Coral Island, wherever that is," was his answer, "and I'll be glad to get there. We're going to have a storm before long," as he glanced at his barometer.

The wind was getting stronger, and every now and then a puff of air would strike them in the face like a wet rag. It was growing chilly and Sandy's barometer was a true predictor—a storm was coming, and it was coming fast.

They soon spied the outlines of land ahead of them and as they drew nearer, they saw it was a small island formed of coral, with a few trees and shrubs on it. It presented a very pretty appearance to the occupants of the raft, for it was a welcome haven of refuge.

The clouds were growing blacker each moment and now and then a heavy roll of thunder could be heard.

"We certainly are lucky," the Plumed Knight de-

clared. "If this storm had caught us in mid-ocean we never would have lived to see the Sphinx or anything else."

"Right ye are!" Sandy assented quickly, "and this is goin' to be a hummer," and he looked anxiously at the sky.

The waves were growing rough and the little house was just beginning to toss about like a cockleshell, when the mermaids pushed it through an opening, and there in the center of the island was a lake as smooth as a mirror.

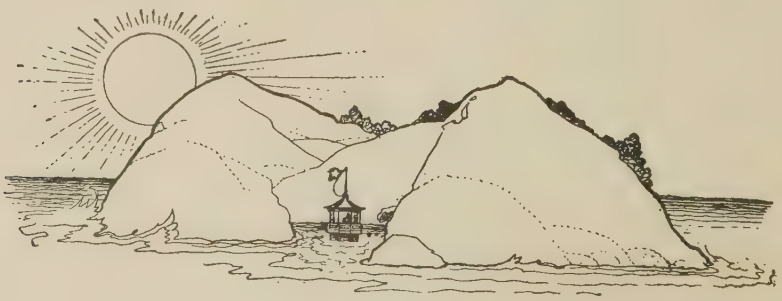
The island was shaped like a doughnut, the lake forming the hole.

"This is our home," said Flo-Flo, as they beached the craft. "Welcome to Coral Island!"

"Flo-Flo, you're a jewel," decided the grateful pig, as he stepped on shore and stretched his cramped legs.

The others willingly did the same, and all were profuse in their thanks to the water fairy. She had saved their lives.

"Thank you," she murmured, embarrassed at the flattery. "No matter how stormy it is outside, you will



They were pulling and pushing them through the water at a good speed.

be safe and comfortable in here. There is a cave where you will be well sheltered," and she pointed to an opening in the shrubbery.

Large drops of rain now started to fall, and by the time Pinkey and his friends had reached the cave with their supplies and oil stove, the storm broke, pouring in torrents, and the wind howled and screeched through the trees.

Flo-Flo and her sisters waved farewell and disappeared in the waters of the little lake.

Sandy proceeded to light the little stove, cooked a hearty meal, and then lit his pipe. Finally he remarked, "Boys, strange things have happened to us today."

"I should say so!" acquiesced Pinkey, still thinking of the mermaids, "I should think they would drown."

"Who?" inquired Sir Adolphus, as he brushed some crumbs from his vest.

"The mermaids."

"Oh, they are not built like we are," Sandy said knowingly. "Fishes don't drown, do they? Well, neither do mermaids."

"Do they live on the bottom of the ocean?" the Plumed Knight asked, marveling at their habits.

"Sure!" came the reply from Philippe. "I'll venture to say they have little houses with furniture built out of coral, beds of moss to sleep on, and instead of electric lights they probably use the glowfish, whose light is as

strong as that of a candle."

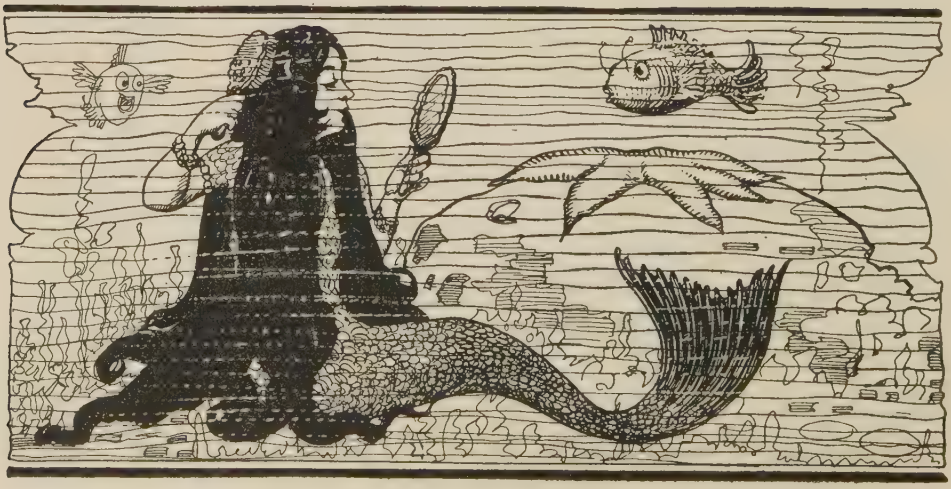
"A very pretty idea," declared the pig, "but I think I should prefer this cave; it's dry, at least."

"This place is as good as any in a storm like this, and as I am very tired, I move we all retire and get some sleep," Pinkey suggested, with a yawn.

"A very sensible idea," someone agreed.

There was plenty of soft moss and dry seaweed to be found in the cave and as the rain fell and the winds howled, the shipwrecked sailors of the once speedy craft called Cupid made their beds and dropped off into peaceful slumber, satisfied to be out of reach of the terrible storm that was raging outside.

One more day had passed, and still our friends were safe, notwithstanding the many perilous adventures which had befallen them since they left the coast of Scotland.



CHAPTER SEVEN

PRISONERS ON CORAL ISLAND

Pinkey awoke with a start. The sun was shining and as the stirring events of the day before flashed through his mind, he jumped to his feet and shook the others. They all awoke much refreshed and with one accord rushed toward the lake to take a morning dip.

Sandy then prepared breakfast and soon had the coffee boiling on the oil stove. They had seen no signs of the mermaids, but as the party was busily engaged in eating, they heard voices calling to them.

Hurrying out, they beheld Flo-Flo and her many sisters approaching the shore, carrying oysters and many

forms of sea-food, all new to the adventurers.

"They are for you," she said simply, as the shells were laid at their feet.

Pinkey and his companions welcomed a change of food and, thanking the thoughtful mermaids, they soon had the delicious oysters broiling over the fire.

The sun was shining and the blue sky and balmy breezes proclaimed a beautiful day.

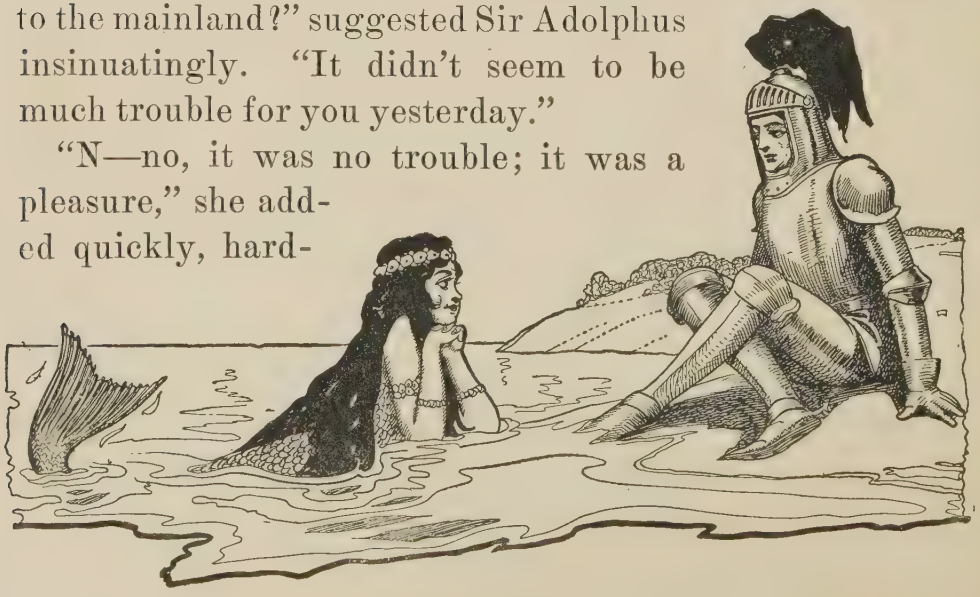
"Flo-Flo," said Sandy seriously, as he finished his last oyster, "how are we going to get away from here?"

"I'm sure I do not know," she answered, looking away from them vaguely.

"We've got to continue our journey," the Plumed Knight informed her as he met her gaze.

"Couldn't you and your sisters push our summerhouse to the mainland?" suggested Sir Adolphus insinuatingly. "It didn't seem to be much trouble for you yesterday."

"N—no, it was no trouble; it was a pleasure," she added quickly, hard-



ly knowing what to say, "but we would like to have you stay here for a while."

"Couldn't think of it," said Pinkey decidedly. "Besides, we have an important engagement in Egypt."

"But how are you going to keep your engagement?" she questioned, with mischief in her eyes.

"Why, you will help us, won't you?"

"Perhaps," was her short reply, and she glanced at the Plumed Knight lovingly.

He certainly was good looking.

"We must leave to-day," continued Pinkey anxiously, "and we want you and your sisters to help us reach the mainland."

"We shall be in your debt, if you do," remarked Sir Adolphus in his most polite tone.

The water fairy glanced at them keenly for a moment, and then said, "My sisters and I have taken a fancy to all of you, and so we have decided to keep you here as our guests—for a while, anyhow."

"But, Flo-Flo," insisted Philippe, somewhat angrily.

"It will do you no good to argue," she interrupted, anticipating his objections, "it is not often that we have so many fair visitors, and we don't want you to leave us so soon."

"Well, by the great long-horn-spoon!" ejaculated Sandy in exasperation, "what do you think of that?"

Philippe looked the fisherman in the eye knowingly and said, "I think the Plumed Knight's good looks

have been responsible for this state of affairs."

"The idea!" cried the Plumed Knight, starting to deny such a suggestion, but just then he saw Flo-Flo looking at him intently and so loving was the glance that he stammered and hesitated and finally blushed like a schoolgirl.

"That's it!" and Sandy slapped his knee emphatically. "You've hit the nail square on the head. She is in love with him—as sure as I'm a sailor."

"Perhaps it is me," suggested Sir Adolphus, vainly, as he straightened up and threw out his chest with pride.

"Well, whoever it is," Pinkey observed, ignoring the pig's ridiculous remark, "we can't stay here forever on account of a love affair."

"You'll have to stay until we release you," spoke up Flo-Flo laughingly, "but as my guests, you shall want for nothing."

Sandy gripped his pipe with his teeth and inquired sarcastically, "How long do you think we shall have to remain here as your guests?"

She hesitated and thought for a moment. Looking up coyly, she answered, "Oh, a month, a year—perhaps longer," and after glancing at the ex-yeoman she sighed and dropped her eyes.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Pinkey in amazement. "A year—perhaps more?"

She nodded her head.

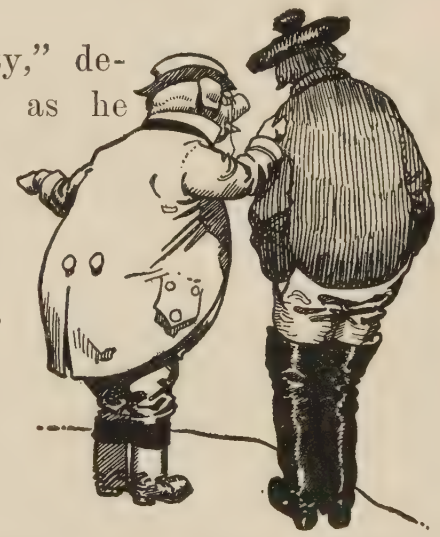
"I'll see about that," murmured Sandy under his

breath, his anger getting the best of him.

"We're in for it now," Sir Adolphus sighed dolefully.

"Imprisoned on a large doughnut in the middle of the ocean, with a troupe of lady fishes for our jailers," Sandy observed disgustedly.

In the meantime the other mermaids had gathered around their leader, looking on and listening with interest.



"They certainly are pretty," decided the fashionable pig, as he glanced from one girl to another, "and no mistake."

"Yes, but they're fish," said Philippe, "and whoever heard of falling in love with a fish?"

"I didn't say I was in love with them!" the pig retorted impatiently. "I merely observed that they were pretty."

"Sir John," said Sandy, turning to the soldier, "I wish you had never shaved off your beard and mustache—you're too good lookin'!"

The Plumed Knight laughed and said he thought his looks had nothing to do with their predicament, but he knew better.

The old fisherman added, "Well, I for one don't intend to stay here for a month or a year."

This remark was made in a gruff undertone.

"Can't we escape?" whispered the pig in Sandy's ear.

"That same thought has been runnin' through my brain, and if I don't get you all out of here inside of forty-eight hours, I'm a crawfish!"

"What a team those girls would make for game of water polo!" declared Pinkey aloud to Philippe.

"We might import a dozen or two and match them against the Oxfords," suggested Sir Adolphus, who had seen a game in the lake at Dunehurst.

"By ginger!" declared Philippe, his eye lighting up with excitement, "what a fortune we could make if we could take this whole colony of mermaids back to Scotland and exhibit them around the country!"

"Yes, but you've got to catch them first," said the pig, rather dubiously.

"Now let's not talk foolishly," the Knight requested of them seriously. "Don't lose your heads. Remember, we are going to Egypt on an important mission, so just keep that in mind."

After saying this, he snapped down his visor to keep Flo-Flo from seeing his face.

The water fairy seemed rather vexed at the action and left them, shrugging her shoulders like a spoiled child.

"Spoken like a man!" the old skipper declared, and he slapped the Knight on the back, nearly breaking his hand.

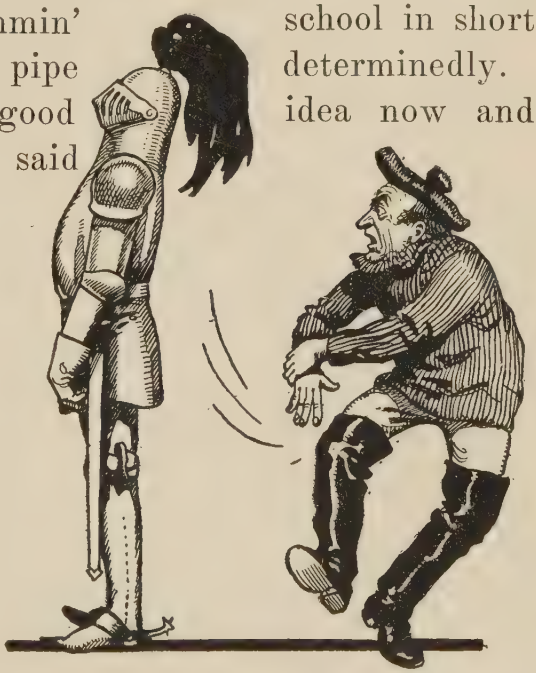
"Ouch!" he yelled and danced around, holding his

injured member with the other, "I keep forgetting that you are as hard as a granite block!"

The others could not help laughing at him as he snorted and ranted about in anger. He finally calmed down enough to remark, "Boys, we must escape!"

"But how?" they cried.

"I don't know yet, but leave it to me. We'll skip out of the female swimmin' school in short order," and he relit his pipe determinedly.



"The captain has a good idea now and then," Philippe said staunchly.

"We admit that," Pinkey assented, as he remembered the whale school.

"Then that's settled," Sir Adolphus decided, and at the fisherman's suggestion they walked to the other side of the island and watched the mighty waves of the ocean as they rolled up on the beach.

"We might sight a vessel," one suggested.

"Yes—we might, and then we might not," retorted the fisherman, looking out to sea.

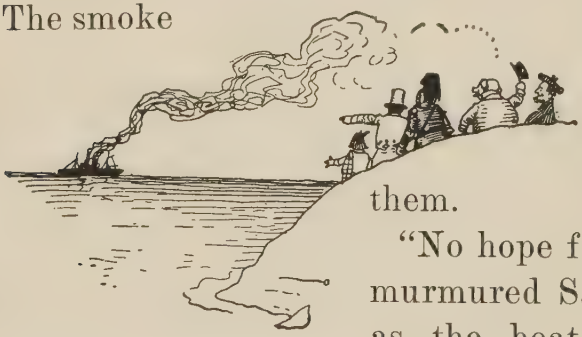
"We are probably out of the regular path of vessels,"

announced the scholarly pig. "I don't believe anyone has ever set foot on this island beside ourselves."

"You can bank on that," Philippe agreed, as he too gazed out to sea.

While talking, they noticed a large number of flying fish rise from the water, their bodies shimmering in the sunlight. They would fly a short distance and then flop into the waves with a loud splash.

Suddenly someone cried, "Sail ho!" and they all rushed to a prominent point of land. There they could see the outlines of a ship as it steamed slowly along. The smoke stacks were barely visible, and it was evident the boat was not coming toward them.



"No hope for us with that one," murmured Sandy disappointedly, as the boat grew smaller and smaller, finally disappearing over the horizon.

"Probably some ship blown out of its course by yesterday's storm," Philippe added sorrowfully.

Sandy intimated that he was right and then said, "Come with me. I'm goin' to explore this island. We may find somethin' we may need."

The others followed him and they walked around the entire island. Nothing out of the ordinary was seen except some tall, tough weeds. Sandy cut one and tested

its strength and found he was unable to break it.

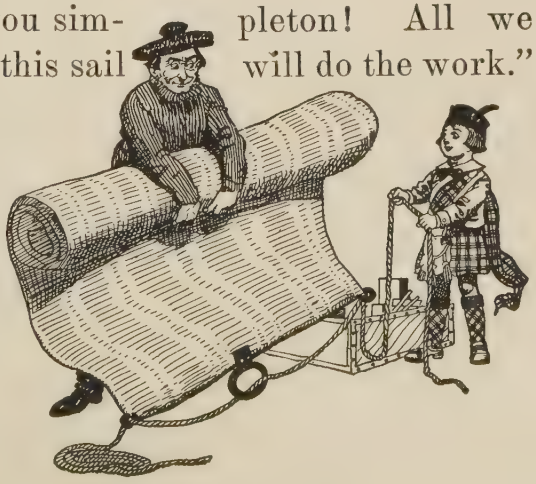
"The very thing!" and the others waited patiently for him to explain. "We can weave a sail out of this weed," and he then and there made them sit down on the sand in a circle, while he cut large quantities of the grass. He gave them each a bundle and then showed them how to weave the weeds together. It was very simple and soon they were busily engaged in making a large sail. They wove the grass in the same manner as if making baskets.

By working hard all day, they had the sail completed by sunset. It was about ten feet high and though it was not very ornamental, it would undoubtedly prove serviceable. With the aid of some rings, ropes and hooks that he procured from his chest, Sandy soon had everything completed and ready to fasten to the boat.

"Where is the boat we are to sail in?" asked Sir Adolphus, with his usual curiosity.

Sandy gazed at him in pity.

"The summerhouse, you simpleton! All we need is horsepower and this sail will do the work."



They concealed the finished sail in the brushwood so Flo-Flo would know nothing of their plans, and retraced their steps to the cave by the inner lake.

"We're what you

might call prisoners," Pinkey said, as he called their attention to the mermaids, who guarded the outlet.

"That's what we are—until to-night," Sandy whispered softly.

"To-night?"

"Yep. To-night the Cupid sets sail for Africa, if I know my business, and I think I do."

"What's your plan?" questioned Sir Adolphus.

"Wait and see," he answered mysteriously, and, winking one eye, he entered the cave.

After supper, when the moon was up, the mermaids swam about the lake, and sang weird chants and songs for the entertainment of their guests.

As they sat or reclined on the soft sands by the lake, listening to the water fairies, Sandy looked at his watch and remarked that it was eleven o'clock. Knocking the ashes out of his pipe, he further suggested that they go to bed.

The hard work of the day had tired them out completely, so the idea met with unanimous approval. Sandy said he would remain awake, as he had many things to do to complete his plans for the escape, but agreed to wake them when ready. They sought their beds of moss, and all went fast to sleep.

The mermaids disappeared into the water, confident that their prisoners had no immediate means of escape.

The moon gradually sank behind some clouds and all

that was visible was the red glow of the faithful fisherman's pipe as he sat in front of the cave, smoking and thinking of his plans to leave Coral Island.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ESCAPE

After everything was quiet, Sandy put out his pipe and prepared to work. He brought the sail from its hiding-place and then fastened it firmly to the flag-pole of the summerhouse. He also carried the water cask and oil stove out of the cave and placed them on the deck. The others, aroused by his shaking them, awoke and were informed that it was time to start. He also told them to bring their food and supplies to the boat.

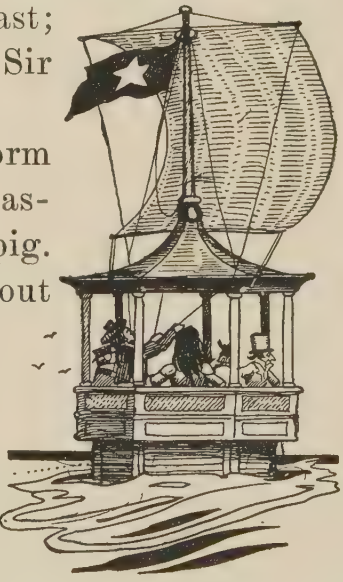
When all was ready, they boarded the boat and Sandy poled the craft through the outlet, being very careful not to make any noise.

They soon passed into the open sea and a sharp breeze fanned their cheeks and the grass sail flapped and filled.

The little house leaped forward with new life, and soon Coral Island was but a thin line behind them.

"I don't mind hospitality," observed the captain, as he put everything in order, "but there is such a thing as too much of it."

"It's the first time I was ever entertained by mermaids," added the barber, much impressed with the strange adventure that had befallen them.



"Yes, and the last; at least as far as I am concerned," Sir John declared firmly.

"Now, if no storm comes up, we ought to have a pleasant journey," said the educated pig.

"We've only about five hundred miles to go, and we ought to make it in three or four days," the skipper announced. "The barometer says fair weather."

Pinkey was watching the waves as they dashed past the side of the craft. Surely they were making fine speed.

"This is just as good as a catamaran," he called to Sandy enthusiastically.

"Wal, I cal'late to know my business purty well," he returned proudly.

And he certainly did. He steered the craft in any direction with ease and every hour clipped a good many

miles from between them and their destination.

"I'll feel safer when we reach the land," Sir Adolphus took occasion to remark, as he looked up at the sky anxiously.

"So will I," echoed the barber.

The next morning, Sandy reached for their supplies to get breakfast but not a trace of anything could be found.

"Where's the food?" he cried, as his face grew pale.

Nobody knew.

"Who brought the stuff on board?" he asked.

"I thought Philippe did," Pinkey answered faintly.

"And I thought the Knight did," was all the frightened barber could say.

"And I thought Sir Adolphus brought it on board," St. John said, almost stunned by the terrible discovery.

"You ninnies!" Sandy cried in vexation, "I told you all to bring the supplies on board, and you left them in the cave. You can't expect me to think of everything."

"What's a ninny?" Sir John asked Pinkey, as he wrinkled his brow perplexedly.

Pinkey didn't know, but Sandy said quickly, "A ninny—why, a ninny—is—er—a fellow who doesn't know enough to carry food on board a ship!"

After this explanation he was compelled to take a long breath.

"Have we any food at all?" anxiously inquired Pinkey.

"One small can of biscuits," and he looked at the ar-

ticle in great disgust. "That will provide one meal."

"I can hold out for three or four days, anyhow," stoutly declared Pinkey, as he tightened his belt.

"You'll be good and hungry to-morrow," the old man answered as he lit his pipe. "As for me, I have gone without food before."

"I don't propose that anyone shall go hungry," the soldier said as he unslung his bow and arrows. "I think those flying fish would taste fine broiled."

Without a word, Sandy turned the boat to leeward for a mile or two in order to bring the archer into range.

Suddenly he brought the craft up into the wind, while the ex-yeoman, with his bow bent and the string touching his shoulder, paused and waited for one to fly near them.

As one fluttered across their bows, he took careful aim and let the string snap. Whizz! the arrow sped straight for its mark and down came the fish and splashed into the water. It was a wonderful shot.

It was the work of only a moment for Sandy to reach the prey. He deftly scooped it up and as he started to clean it remarked with a smile, "We can have fried fish every day for dinner with such a remarkable archer as St. John with us. That was the finest shot I ever saw."

"We may get an albatross," he continued; "they are not such bad eating."

"I can probably hit one," the Knight asserted modestly, "if my arrows hold out."

The arrow sped straight for its mark.

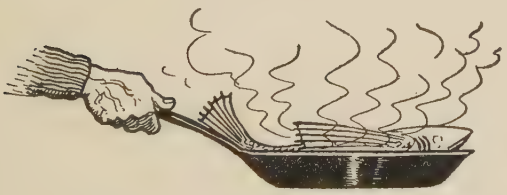
So they dined that day on broiled fish and it was delicious. Their bill of fare for the next three days was the same, the archer always making a fine shot. On the fifth day out, Pinkey, who was looking ahead through the spy-glass, suddenly turned to the others and cried excitedly, "I think I see land!"

Sandy took the telescope and, after squinting through it with one eye, shouted, "It's land all right!"

"Hurrah!" the others cried, and Philippe was so glad that he almost wept.

"I've had enough of sea travel," he sighed with relief.

"So have I," declared the pig vehemently.



"I guess we all have," Sandy also declared, "I'll be glad to leave this craft, I can tell you."

"What land is that?" asked the Plumed Knight.

"Northern coast of Africa," was the answer, "but we are a long way from Egypt yet."

"Yes, but we can walk on land, and we can't on water," was Pinkey's wise observation.

"I'll take a chance on the rest of our journey," said the skipper as he deftly steered the craft through the breakers.

The shores were low and sandy and very little foliage was to be seen. It was a desolate looking country, to

be sure, and its barren waste of sand was not very inviting to the wanderers, but as beggars cannot be choosers, they were glad to stand on land again, no matter where it was. They couldn't drown there, that was sure.

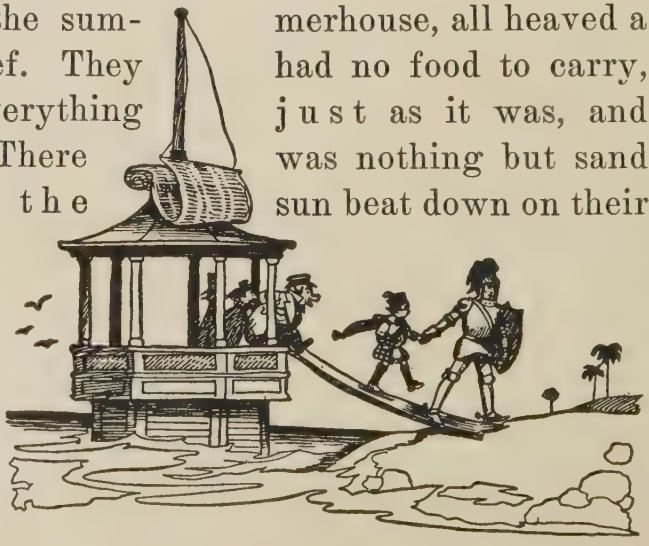
"It looks like a desert," remarked Philippe as he jumped to the shore.

"It is. I don't know what country we are in," Sandy answered, "but these countries along this coast are civilized, anyhow."

"My geography says that Morocco, Tripoli and Algeria form the northern coast of Africa," said Pinkey, whose memory was good.

"Morocco is further to the west," declared the captain as he beached the raft. "Accordin' to my cal'lations, this is Tripoli, and if it is, we can cut across the desert and reach Egypt in short order."

As they left the summerhouse, all heaved a long sigh of relief. They had no food to carry, so they left everything just as it was, and started inland. There was nothing but sand everywhere and the sun beat down on their heads with intense heat.



"I don't like the looks of this place," exclaimed the ex-yeoman, as he re-

moved his helmet and carefully mopped his brow.

"We've jumped from the frying-pan into the fire," grunted Sir Adolphus ruefully, as beads of perspiration ran down his fat cheeks.

"There must be a village, a city or a town near here somewhere—even an oasis would do," Sandy remarked in anxious tones. The terrible heat and lack of civilization worried him.

"We can't walk across this entire desert," Philippe gasped.

"Of course not," argued Sandy, somewhat out of patience. "We don't intend to! All I want is a starting place where I can get my breath and some information."

They walked on and on, the heat becoming more oppressive as they left the coast behind them.

Finally Pinkey declared that he could not go another step. The tears came to his eyes, and he was almost exhausted.

Things indeed looked desperate, and Sandy was thinking seriously of retracing their steps to the beach and embarking again on the Cupid, when he espied a solitary camel and driver jogging along toward them.

"Well, at last!" he shouted in better spirits. "Here comes somethin' that has life to it. Now we can find out

where we are and in what direction to travel."

As the camel approached, they could see the driver was a typical Arab fierce in looks, and he had a long gun slung over his shoulder. A long white robe and turban completed his appearance.

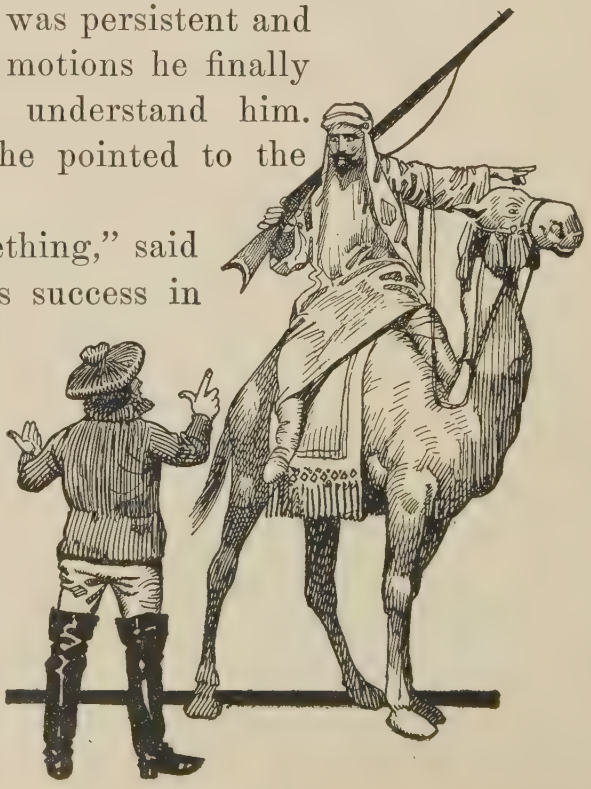
The camel was a fast traveler and was soon abreast of them. At a command, the dromedary stopped, and the Arab sat in his saddle and eyed the party curiously.

Sandy stepped forward and asked where they were and how they could reach the nearest village.

The man shook his head. He could not speak English.

But the old sailor was persistent and by many signs and motions he finally made the man understand him. Nodding his head, he pointed to the south.

"That means something," said Sandy, elated at his success in gleaning the meager information, "so we'll keep on walking."



The driver whipped his camel and disappeared over the desert.

They did keep on —and on, until their

heads grew dizzy and each one felt as if he would die.

Suddenly there loomed up before them an oasis like the magical tree of a magician. Tall palms were swaying in the breezes, and grass was growing underneath.

Sandy grasped Pinkey by the hand and started to run.

"Come on! There is water here somewhere!"

They ran like a flock of sheep, Sir Adolphus in the rear, his fat body shaking like a bowl of jelly with his strenuous exertions. They staggered into the welcome shade and, sure enough, there in the center of the oasis was a pool of clear water.

Throwing themselves down on their stomachs, they drank like animals. When they could find breath to talk, Sandy murmured, "Boys, we're saved again!"

There were only sighs of assent, and, utterly exhausted, too tired to talk and almost unconscious, they fell asleep.

CHAPTER NINE

THEY MEET RAZMATAZ, THE ARABIAN CHIEFTAIN

The afternoon was well on when they awoke. Scattered about were over a hundred fierce Arabs in bright-colored garments. Tents were pitched here and there; camels were kneeling and being unloaded; hoarse cries of command were heard; the bells of the camels jingled as they moved about, and it was very evident that a large caravan had arrived at the oasis and was preparing to spend the night.

Such a remarkable and unusual sight bewildered the sleepers and the best they could do was to sit up and look on. Standing directly in front of them were six of the Arabs, leaning on their long guns and gazing at the party intently. They would first look at Sir Adolphus

and then at the Plumed Knight. Each glance was cause for numerous exclamations in their native tongue, many nods of the head and much laughing.

Sandy took the situation in at a glance and, scratching his bald head, said, "Boys, here is where it is time to do some talkin'. I don't like their looks, so the quicker I begin, the sooner we will know what is in store for us."

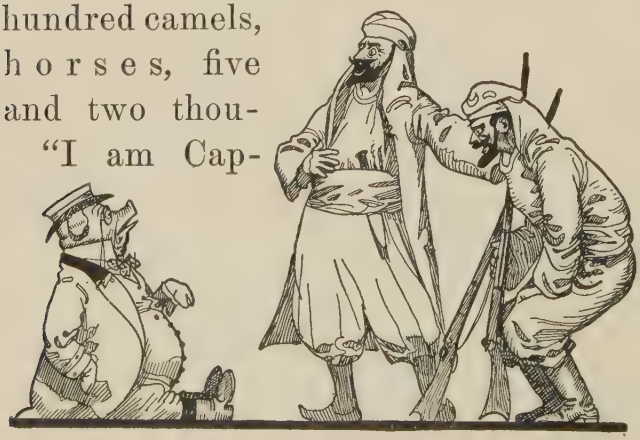
He scrambled to his feet and walked boldly toward one fierce man, whose rich dress and commanding appearance seemed to denote the leader.

"Can you speak English?" he asked, expecting the man to shake his head in the negative.

What was his surprise and delight to hear him reply, "I speak all languages. Are you English?"

"No, we are Scotch, but we speak English. Might I ask who ye are? And what ye're doin' here?"

"I am Razmataz, chieftain of the desert, master of five hundred camels, one thousand horses, five thousand sheep and two thousand soldiers."



"I am Captain Sandy McPherson, master of two hundred head of sperm-oil whales, skipper of the good ship Cupid and

master of ceremonies to Their Majesties, Sir Adolphus Pigtail and Sir John St. Germaine, Knight of the Golden Cross and Captain of Yeomanry in the army of Joan of Arc."

Sandy strung these titles out as long as he could, and it was plain to be seen that the Arab was much impressed with them.

"Ah!" exclaimed the interested chieftain, and turning to his soldiers, he evidently told them what Sandy had said, for they came closer and seemed more curious.

"Where is your caravan?" he asked the skipper.

"We have none. Will you sell us some camels?"

The Arab shook his head and refused.

"Where are you going?" was Razmataz's next question.

"Egypt."

A look of astonishment came over the Arab's face.

"Egypt?" he repeated and then calling his men to his side, he told them what Sandy had said, and they seemed to consider it a huge joke.

"Where might you be a-goin'?" asked Sandy, nothing daunted by their number and fierceness.

"Egypt," he replied with a smile. "I am on my wedding journey," he added, as if inclined to talk proudly before his men.

Looking at them for a moment and lighting a long pipe, he continued, "I hope to wed Princess Lotus, Princess of the Lotus Flowers, on the River Nile. My camels bear beautiful and costly presents to her. I am

very rich." And he cast a proud look about.

"You hope to wed her?" repeated Sandy after him. "Isn't it all fixed yet?"

"Alas, no! But I hope to overcome her objections with so many fine presents."

"Glad to hear it," was all Sandy could think to say.

The chieftain bowed his head and resumed, "We break camp to-morrow morning. If I succeed, the ceremony will take place a week from to-day."

"You don't say so! Is the Princess good looking?" inquired the fisherman, who really didn't care two pins whether she was or not.

"She is indeed very beautiful," he replied thoughtfully, "but alas," and he sighed, "she is unable to talk."

"What?" cried the now interested Sandy. "Can't talk? What seems to be the matter?"

"Dumb," was the short answer. "She hears and understands, but cannot speak. She has never uttered one word since she was born."

"I am Razmataz, chieftain of the desert!"

"Great sea gulls!" the excited skipper ejaculated, as he grabbed the surprised Arab by the arm and dragged him toward his companions. "Meet my friends," he said simply, and presented the others to Razmataz ceremoniously.

They sat in the cool shade of the palm trees and there Razmataz told them a strange tale.

He spoke of Pyro, an Egyptian wizard, whose great forefathers had made a wonderful snuff that would give any living thing the power to speak and understand, be it animal, bird or man, claiming that it would restore life. In the books of the wizard, where a record of all wonderful Egyptian magic arts are kept, he could find no trace or formula of the magic snuff. Pyro had searched through the archives of the Sphinx, but there was no record of it anywhere.

The Princess Lotus was very rich, and had offered her hand in marriage and half her wealth to the person who would give her the power of speech.

Many wizards, soothsayers, physicians and magicians had tried and failed.

She had even promised to marry the one who would succeed in helping her.

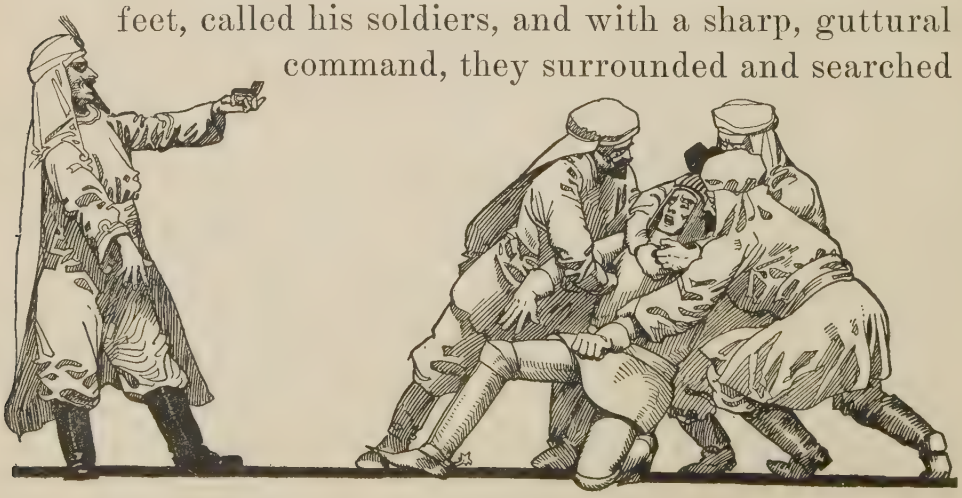
Razmataz said he was to have the services of a noted doctor when he arrived in Egypt. He was to meet him in Lotus Land. If he succeeded, all well and good. He had agreed to relinquish the rights to her hand in favor of Razmataz, but the reward was to go to the physician.

If he failed, then the task was impossible, and he would try to win the love of the Princess by his devotion and presents.

It was a wonderful story, and his listeners sat as if spellbound. They would glance at one another significantly and listen. Each was thinking of the snuff box that had brought Sir John to life and given to Sir Adolphus Pigtail the human powers of speech and thought. When he was finished, there was silence for a moment, broken by a cry from Pinkey, who jumped to his feet with delight and said, "We have it! The magic snuff! There in his pocket!" pointing to the Plumed Knight.

"Be quiet!" cried Sandy warningly, but he was too late. The Arab had heard.

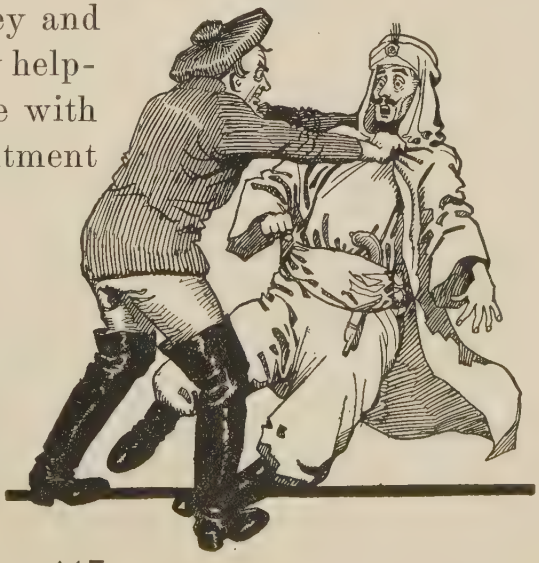
"What? Do you mean to say that you have the magic snuff? Allah be praised!" and Razmataz jumped to his feet, called his soldiers, and with a sharp, guttural command, they surrounded and searched



the Knight, who struggled and wriggled about. If he could have reached his quiver of arrows, it would have gone hard with them, but they outnumbered him and his helpless friends, although they tried their best to prevent them from getting the snuff box. It was but a second until the exhausted ex-yeoman's arms were tied and the snuff box passed to the chieftain.

He snatched it from their hands and eagerly opened it. After reading the inscription that was on the inside of the cover, he shut it quickly and danced around like a madman, shouting and singing, his comrades firing their guns into the air and shouting themselves hoarse.

The noise brought the other members of the caravan to their side, and when they learned of the capture of the snuff box, the camp became a riotous scene. They hugged one another, wept on each other's shoulders—and all this time Pinkey and his companions stood by helplessly, their faces white with fear and rage, disappointment written on each one.



"We're lost!" groaned the Knight, who was the first to speak.

Pinkey burst into tears.

"Cheated—robbed!" gasped Sandy, his eyes

blazing with anger at the unwarranted theft of their snuff box.

He ran to Razmataz, grabbed him by the arm and spun him around like a boy does a top, shaking him until his teeth rattled.

"Give me back that snuff box!" he roared as he made the chieftain see stars, but the Arabs were too many and they pounced on the brave fisherman and bore him to the ground.

"Bind him up!" shrieked the now frenzied Razmataz, who was enraged at the indignity of Sandy's onslaught.

They tied him up the same as the Knight, and all the members of the party were forced into a large tent, where they were left to themselves. A low-browed Arab was placed on guard, with instructions to shoot them if they tried to escape.

Philippe hastily cut the ropes that bound his two friends and asked, "Now what?" thoroughly discouraged.

"I'm not done for yet," said Sandy, as he breathed hard from his recent exertions. "He's a thief and I will get even with him if it takes a thousand years."

"We must get away from here," whispered Sir Adolphus, who seemed to realize the gravity of their predicament.

"Ye're right, Pigtail!" growled the captain of the Cupid, still fuming over their outrageous treatment, "and we're goin' to do it, too."

"How?" they all asked eagerly.

"I can't tell yet, but I'm a-goin' to look round as soon as it gets dark."

They kept very quiet so as not to excite their already crazy captors, and discussed their plans in whispers.

Pinkey was heart-broken at his own thoughtlessness, but they comforted and cheered him as best they could, notwithstanding the terrible disappointment that had overtaken them.

"To think," said the Plumed Knight bitterly, "of all we have suffered and put up with, and then to have that jibbering Arabian monkey come along and take our magic snuff box away from us by force! I want to fight!" and he unslung bow and arrows.

"Put them up," Sandy commanded rather sternly. "What is done to-night must be done by strategy and not by force."

The Knight saw the wisdom of the words, and begged his pardon for being so hasty.

"Granted," was his reply. "I lost my temper a few moments ago, too."

"Can't we get that snuff box away from him before we leave here?" Philippe asked, anxious to solve the problem.

"No," argued Sir Adolphus, "that villain Razmataz will guard it with his life. Later on, perhaps, when his vigilance has relaxed."

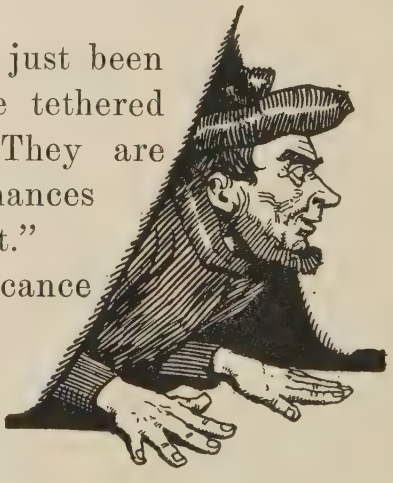
"That's true," assented the old fisherman, as he wriggled to the edge of the tent and peeped out. He

rolled back again and said, "If we can get away from here to-night and reach Princess Lotus first, we can tell her of Razmataz' theft and claim our rights."

"She may not believe us," said Pinkey, dubiously.

"We can prove it by showing Sir Adolphus and the Plumed Knight to her. She is bound to see the truth of our statement."

Sir Adolphus sighed and then said, "How are we to get away?"



Sandy told them that he had just been watching the camels that were tethered on the edge of the camp. "They are guarded by one man, and the chances are that he will be asleep to-night."

He paused to let the significance of his remark sink deep, and then continued, "As soon as it is midnight, we must crawl out through the back of this tent, reach those camels, silence the keeper, and get away with three of them."

"And if we fail?" interrupted the Knight, knowing full well the answer.

"Then we stand a fine chance of being shot—but 'nothing ventured, nothing gained' and I don't propose to sit by and let this black-hearted villain win this game, even if he has all the trumps in his hand."

"'Desperate diseases require desperate remedies',"

quoted the philosophical pig, "and I think we are desperate enough for anything."

Sandy laid his finger in the palm of his hand effectively and said, "Our adventures up to now have been child's play." He wished to impress upon them the seriousness of their situation. "You must do exactly as I say, and I promise to get you out of here. One false move, and our goose is cooked."

"True," decided the barber wisely; "we are dealing with a villain and we will follow your instructions to the letter."

They felt confident that the fisherman's fighting blood was up, and the steely glitter in his eyes and the way he bit his teeth into the stem of his pipe boded no good for Razmataz.

CHAPTER TEN

THE FLIGHT ACROSS THE DESERT

The prisoners kept very quiet, and as the darkness of night set in, the camp became as silent as the desert itself. Now and then the camel bells could be heard as the animals shifted their position.

The stars came out and soon the even breathing of their guard could be heard. The time to escape had arrived. Luckily there was no moon.

Softly, one by one, they lifted the canvas in the rear of the tent and rolled out into the open.

Sandy carried a rope and handkerchief handy, and as the shade of the trees was dense, they moved quickly to the outer edge of the oasis without being seen or heard.

The camels were calmly dozing and chewing their

cuds. The animals were tethered some distance from the tents, so the success of their plans seemed assured.

They tiptoed toward the keeper, who lay stretched out on the sands sound asleep. Before the astonished Arab could move or cry out, the wily fisherman had pounced upon him like a rabbit.

He was then bound and gagged effectively, and laid out on the sand like a mummy, to be found the next morning.

Quickly piling some luggage that contained food and water on the saddles, and placing Pinkey and Sir John on one camel, Philippe and Sir Adolphus on another, Sandy mounted the third, and there they sat. The camels would not move!

"Great codfish!" the old man ejaculated under his breath. "I don't know how to make them go!"

He shook the reins and dug his heels into his camel's sides, but the dromedary went on calmly chewing.

Every moment was precious, and the least sound would likely awaken someone, and they would be dragged back, and their lives possibly forfeited.

Finding a whip that was attached to the saddle, he

gave his camel a sharp cut across the neck. This seemed to be the right signal, for the animal scrambled to his feet and almost threw Sandy to the ground.

He softly called to the others and told them to do the same, which they did. The camels got up awkwardly and Sir Adolphus went tumbling to the sand. Luckily he had sense enough not to cry out, and as the ground was soft and he was fat, there was no great damage done, except to shake him up considerably and injure his dignity. Philippe reached down and pulled him up to the saddle again.

With a few cautious words of command, the cavalcade started off on a quick trot across the desert.

Sandy did not know the exact route, but as long as they were going east he felt safe in leaving the rest to the intelligence of the animals, as they no doubt had been over the same ground many times before.

The camels had been fed and watered, so they were well rested and now made good time.

The passengers clung to the saddles as they swayed from side to side, and Pinkey said afterward that they re-

minded him of the monkeys that ride on the backs of Shetland ponies in a circus.

It was particularly hard on Sir Adolphus. He was not built to fit a camel's saddle with comfort, and he had hard work holding on and catching his breath between the jolts. The others fared better, but all realized the necessity of hanging on. This they bravely did, and soon the oasis faded away behind them and they were on the great and lonesome desert, with nothing to guide them on their way but the camels, and no light except that of the stars.

In the meantime, Razmataz was peacefully sleeping in his tent, dreaming of his beautiful bride-to-be, now that he had possession of the magic snuff box.

Did he marry the Princess Lotus? We shall see.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PRINCESS LOTUS

They traveled for three days, stopping at different villages for water and food. Fortunately, no adventures or accidents occurred to mar their journey, although the continual jolting of the clumsy camels shook them up and tired them out completely.

The travelers had no trouble in following the route. In each village there was someone who was intelligent enough to understand their signs and motions and to guide them right.

At the end of the fourth day, they saw the dim outlines of a city ahead of them. As they drew nearer, square, white houses, temples and kiosks, palm trees

and tropical foliage told them that they were approaching the domains of Princess Lotus.

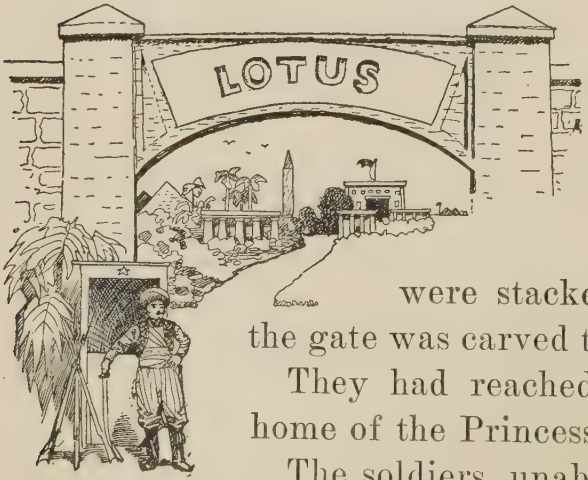
Far away to the south they could see the tops of the Pyramids and the Sphinx.

"We're almost there!" shouted Sandy to his comrades joyously.

"Well, I'm glad of it," breathed the now wilted and tired pig. "Another day of this, and I would fall to pieces."

The camels entered the city on a brisk trot. They seemed to know that they were near their journey's end. As they sped by, the dark-skinned people stopped and stared at them in amazement. They had never seen such a strange caravan before. After an hour or more, they rode up to a large, handsomely decorated gateway. Here the animals stopped.

Standing on guard were a number of Egyptian soldiers, their dark skins contrasting picturesquely with their snow-white uniforms and purple turbans. Muskets were stacked close by, and over the gate was carved the one word Lotus.



They had reached the entrance to the home of the Princess.

The soldiers, unable to understand their

language, called the Captain of the Guard, who spoke English very well.

"What is it you wish?" he inquired, as he saluted.

"We wish to see the Princess Lotus," Sandy answered quickly.

"What is your business?"

"We cannot tell you, but it is very important and we have traveled a long way to see her."

"I will take your message," he said promptly, seeming to be impressed by their words and appearance.

He disappeared through the gateway, and was gone for some time. On returning, he motioned to the guards to open the gates, and said, "Enter!"

He guided the camels, the soldiers following closely as an escort.

Inside of the walls the sight that met their gaze was the most beautiful they had ever seen. Tall and stately palms protected the park from the heat of the sun, and underneath were flowers of gorgeous colors.

Statuary of every description was grouped around, and white, cool walks of stone wound in and out among the trees.

Through the foliage could be seen the waters of the River Nile. Fountains of fantastic design were throwing water high in the air, cooling the atmosphere to a delightful temperature.

They were led directly to the palace of the Princess, built in Egyptian architecture. On each side of the en-

trance were two gold lions. The tall pillars were of marble, and the portico was decorated with carvings representing scenes from Egyptian history.

It truly was a fairyland, and the poor, tired arrivals were glad to dismount, stretch their weary limbs and enjoy the fragrance of the lotus flowers that bloomed by the thousands along the shores of the Nile.

They were ushered through long, cool corridors, furnished with gorgeous divans, tapestries, statues and vases. The floors were of mosaic and of intricate pattern and beauty. A fountain splashed in the center of each room.

The Captain of the Guard walked to a closed door, raised a heavy, gold knocker of unique design and let it fall three times.

Instantly it was opened by a pretty Egyptian maid. In her own strange tongue she bade them enter and as they crossed the threshold, they realized that they were in the presence of the Princess.

She was reclining on a luxurious couch. Behind her stood two Ethiopian attendants, each waving to and fro a long-handled fan of peacock feathers. Grouped about were handmaidens, servants, soldiers and messengers. At her feet, calmly dozing, was a pet tiger.

Their guide withdrew, and a tall, dark Egyptian stepped forward and said, "I am Plinto, the royal secretary. The Princess cannot speak; therefore you will deliver your message to me. What is it that is so important to make you travel so far to see the Princess Lotus?"

So interested were they in gazing at the Princess that his question was not heard.

They observed that the Princess was very beautiful—more so than anyone they had ever seen. She was slender and graceful, and young in years. On her head was a richly jeweled cap from which protruded over her forehead the head of a serpent. In its mouth was a large diamond of fabulous value.

Many rings of odd design were on her fingers, and gold and silver bracelets adorned her arms and ankles. The lotus flower was entwined in her luxurious black hair, one over each ear. When she smiled, two rows of pretty white teeth peeped out from between the reddest of lips.

These charms so completely captivated them that the Princess' secretary had to repeat his question.

"Your Majesty," said the fisherman, who acted as spokesman for his friends, "we have traveled from Scotland, a land far from here. We have journeyed in many ways and endured many hardships to see you. We, or I might say, my young friend," pointing to Pinkey, "found a snuff box—an Egyptian snuff box that contains a snuff of wonderful power. So great was its power

that it brought this soldier to life after bein' an ornament for over a thousand years and it also gave this pig,—Sir Adolphus Pigtail, I should say—the power of speech and all human instincts."

He paused to get his breath.

As he talked, the Princess leaned forward, her eyes gleaming with suppressed excitement. The old fisherman's words had created a profound sensation, and all were listening intently.

Sandy continued: "On the inside of the cover are some Egyptian words—a sort of inscription. It was that writin' that brought us here."

The Princess quickly wrote on a tablet and handed it to her secretary. He glanced at it and said,

"The Princess asks for the inscription."

Pinkey, who had memorized the words, then spoke them as they were written:

He who takes a pinch of snuff
From out this box and sneezes
Can live and talk, that's enough,
And do whate'er he pleases.

He also told her of the other lines that spoke of a reward.

The young girl leaned forward, her arms outstretched toward them imploringly.

"Alas!" said the Plumed Knight, removing his steel helmet, "we have lost it," and he bowed his head sadly.

"Lost it?" cried the Egyptian angrily. "How?"

"On landing in this country, after nearly losing our lives by being shipwrecked, we met an Arabian chieftain named Razmataz."

"Ah!" was the involuntary exclamation of many in the room.

"He had many camels and horses laden with beautiful gifts for the Princess Lotus. He told us of her affliction and the legend of the magic snuff box. And when we told him that we had it in our possession, he caused us to be seized and bound, taking the box away from us. We escaped by taking three of his swiftest camels and fleeing to you as soon as possible."

"He stole it from us! He's a thief!" declared the pig angrily.

The Egyptians started in amazement at hearing an animal talk like a human being.

"Summon Pyro!" suddenly commanded the secretary.

A guard left the room, and soon returned with an old man. His beard was white and long, and he leaned heavily on a cane. He was the royal wizard.

"You sent for me?" he asked, bowing before the Princess.

Plinto acknowledged the salute and said, "These

strangers have just arrived and say they have found a box of magic snuff."

The wizard's eyes gleamed, his hands trembled, and his cane fell clattering to the floor. Striding toward them, his voice weak with emotion, he cried:

"Where is it? Let me see it!"

"They have lost it," the secretary informed him, as he laid his hand on the old man's arm to calm him.

"Lost it—lost it?" he murmured brokenly.

"It has been stolen," continued the Egyptian. "Razmataz took it away from these people by force."

"Curse him!" the old man shrieked, as he clenched his fists in frenzy. "Then all is lost!"

"You think this box the strangers speak of is the only one in existence?" Plinto inquired of the wizard.

"Yes—yes, undoubtedly," he murmured half to himself. "I have spent the best part of my life trying to find the formula for this magic snuff. I never dreamed any could be in existence."

Suddenly turning to the party, and grasping the arm of the Plumed Knight, he asked, "Where did you get this box of magic snuff?"

"We found it on the floor of the castle of this boy's father. We think it fell out of an Egyptian vase that was in the room," he replied.

"What was the vase like?—Quick!" he cried.

"I do not remember," sadly replied the Knight.

"Was it like this?" and he hobbled to a tall pedestal that stood in the room, and removed a large vase, holding it up for them to see.

"Yes—yes, that's it!" eagerly exclaimed Pinkey, as he stepped forward. "It was exactly like that one. I remember it well."

The wizard held it aloft and in trembling tones said, "Allah be praised! The lost has been found! The box of magic snuff has been concealed in the rose-leaf jar that disappeared from my grandfather's workshop."

"Then you think the story told by these strangers true?" again asked the cautious secretary.

"Without a doubt, and now that rascal Razmataz has it in his possession, he will claim the reward and the hand of our Princess in marriage. It must not be—it must not be," and he raised his eyes to heaven.

"Strangers," the Egyptian said, "we thank you for the wonderful information you have brought. I shall have Razmataz seized and relieved of the box on his arrival."

The Princess again wrote on the tablet and handed it to him.

He read, "Violence of any kind will cause war and

bloodshed. We must avoid that, you know."

"True! True!" and he paused in doubt.

An idea had just occurred to Sandy, who ventured to speak.

"Your Majesty, instead of force, let us use strategy."

Lotus nodded her head in approval.

Thus encouraged, the fisherman unfolded his scheme.

"When Razmataz arrives, I will try to get the snuff box and substitute a harmless powder in its place. Arrange for a public trial and let him fail before the people. That will prove him to be an impostor, and he will not dare to force his attentions on the Princess after he has failed to give her the power of speech."

"A brilliant idea!" exclaimed the wizard, enthusiastically.

"Then the real snuff can be produced and I will guarantee it to do all we claim."

"It will do it, I am sure," declared Philippe, speaking for the first time. "It even made a whale talk."

The people in the room laughed at his remark as if in disbelief. Pyro raised his hand and solemnly said:

"These men speak the truth. The power of this snuff is unlimited. Ah, to think that I can gain the knowledge I have sought so many years! By analyzing it, I hope to reproduce it in quantities."

"Wunnerful!" ejaculated Sandy, as he started to fill his pipe and then replaced it in his pocket, embarrassed.

The Princess came forward with a smile and held out

They observed that the Princess was very beautiful.

her hand to each one. They bowed low and kissed it. Pausing in front of the Plumed Knight she looked intently at his handsome face and then blushed violently. The soldier returned the look, and bowed low to hide his emotion. As he held her little hand for a moment, he felt a gentle pressure on his fingers, and he knew that it was love at first sight.

"It looks as if the Knight was getting busy with his handsome face again," whispered Sir Adolphus to Philippe, who had also observed the agitation of the Princess.

"I wish him well as long as he doesn't get us into trouble again," he answered softly.

"No danger of it this time."

"What is your plan to regain the magic snuff box?" asked Plinto of Sandy.

"Let us talk it over with my friends," he replied. "Between us all, I think we can secure it without any trouble."

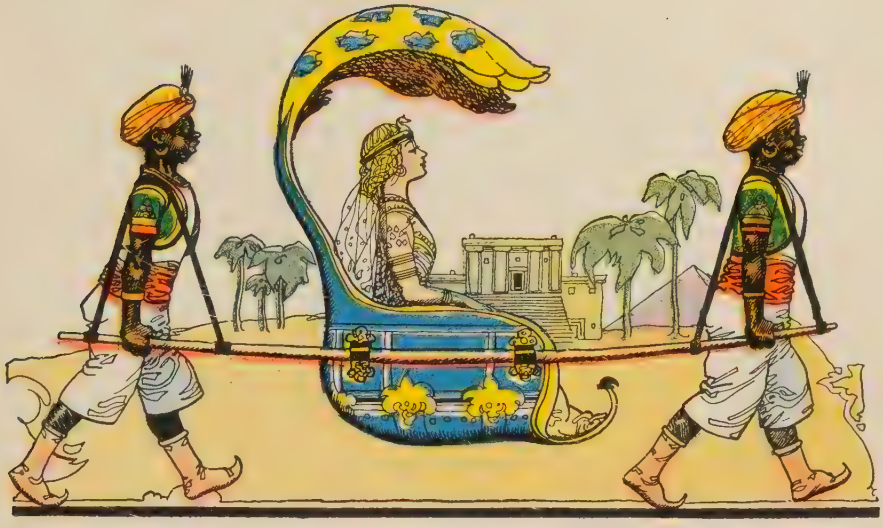
"Very well," said the secretary, in satisfied tones. "Razmataz will probably arrive here in the morning.

On the same afternoon, I will announce a public fête at the Temple of Flowers, in honor of his arrival and his wonderful snuff box," and he laughed mockingly.

"Good!" exclaimed the pleased fisherman, "and I'll fix it so that he fails, never fear. Then we will help this pretty little girl to talk—bless her!" and he gazed at her in admiration.

"It is then left in your hands," decided Plinto. "If you need our help, we will do all we can. In the meantime, you must remain in the palace as the guests of Princess Lotus. I will have you shown to your apartments if you are ready."

He called a guard and after they had again saluted the Princess Lotus the soldier conducted them to another wing of the palace. Here they were left to themselves, clean, white clothes were placed at their disposal, a bath was prepared, and after the long and strenuous camel journey, they were glad to rest and bathe in luxury such as they had never seen before.



CHAPTER TWELVE

SANDY RECOVERS THE SNUFF BOX

The guests' suite of rooms faced on the River Nile, and it was worth their long trip to sit by the windows and see the odd boats sail up and down the broad, blue waters.

Directly below them were the lotus flowers growing by the acre along the shore. Far away across the desert could be seen the Sphinx and the Pyramids.

All had bathed and changed their worn and tattered clothing for native costumes that had been given them.

The Plumed Knight had removed his coat of armor for the first time, and as he entered the room clad in his new garments, he looked like a Roman gladiator.

His figure was that of a trained athlete. He had been shaved by Philippe, and with his laced sandals, loose, short coat that reached half way to his knees and looked like a plaited skirt, his limbs encased in pink fleshings, and a broad, red sash tied at his waist, he was good cause for the heart aches of any Princess.

His comrades looked at him with unconcealed admiration, and vowed he was the handsomest, bravest and finest soldier they had ever seen.

The others were well pleased with their new clothes, all except Sir Adolphus Pigtail and Sandy. Sir Adolphus looked ridiculous and realizing that his figure was not adapted to Egyptian wearing apparel, he compromised by keeping his trousers and boots. He also retained his hat and monocle. Though funny to look at, he did not allow his costume to overcome his dignity.

Pinkey looked like a son of Caesar. Sandy was to all appearances a whirling dervish, with his long white robes and purple turban, but he still smoked his little black pipe, and insisted he would only wear his new outfit on state occasions, when it was absolutely required.

After partaking of a delicious repast of dates, milk cakes, honey and wine, they wandered at will through the beautiful park which surrounded the palace. After admiring the beauties of the gardens by moonlight, they were glad to return to their rooms. While reclining on the soft divans, they fell asleep, one by one, worn out by the exertions of the day.

In the morning, servants brought fresh water and food. On leaving the palace shortly after, they heard the clatter of horses' hoofs on the stone roadway. Looking up quickly, they beheld a band of Arabs galloping down the avenue, headed by Razmataz.

Princess Lotus was just returning from her morning ride in her royal chair, carried on the shoulders of two slaves, when the Arabian chieftain dashed up and dismounted, his face dark with anger at the loss of his camels.

"Greetings, most lovely of Princesses!" he said, his face clearing at the sight of Lotus. "I have learned that a band of foreigners have been here. I wish them imprisoned for stealing three of my swiftest camels."

Turning and seeing the objects of his wrath standing

by, he cried angrily, "There they are now! Seize them!" and he rushed forward, followed by his soldiers.

At a sign from Lotus, Plinto, who was always by her side, advanced and cried, "Stop!"

The Arabs hesitated, unwilling to obey, but the stern face of the secretary warned them. He said: "It is the Princess' command that these people be not molested in any way."

"But they stole my camels!" Razmataz asserted, his evil face glaring at them savagely.

"Then they shall be tried accordingly," was the wise secretary's non-committal answer.

Razmataz seemed to be satisfied with this promise, and hurrying to Lotus' side, he said, kneeling down before her, "Most lovely of Princesses, I have glorious news for you. At great risk and expense, I have found a box of the magic snuff that Pyro has been searching for these many years. It will enable you to speak, and I have brought it to you and when I have proved my claim, I crave your hand and fortune as my reward. I have

also brought my caravan loaded with beautiful and costly presents from many countries."

Lotus looked at him intently for a moment, and then wrote on her tablet the following question:

"Where is this wonderful snuff box?"

"It is in my private chest, under my tent. We are encamped on the outskirts of the city."

Lotus calmly wrote again:

"Summon all your brave Arabs and bid them come to my palace, where I may welcome them in fitting manner. This day, shortly after the noon hour has passed, I shall test your snuff, and if it does all you say, I shall reward you with half my fortune and my hand in marriage."

Razmataz was delighted with her seeming cordiality, and calling one of his soldiers to his side, he issued a sharp order in his native tongue. The man saluted and dashed away. The chieftain had fallen into the Princess' trap.

Sandy, whose plans for the recovery of the magic snuff had been formed, regarded these strange actions on the part of Lotus with interest. He had already concealed in his blouse a bag containing some ground mahogany dust that looked like the magic snuff.

While Razmataz talked in low tones to the Princess, Plinto approached the fisherman's side and whispered, "You heard?—You understand—in the chest—in his tent. They are encamped on the outskirts of the city.

Lotus has summoned all his men here. That will leave the camp empty. Now go—and good luck!" and he returned to the royal chair.

Sandy saw the cleverness of her scheme and slowly walked away in the direction of the gates, fearing to excite the suspicions of the Arabs, who were standing by their horses, waiting for their master.

As he disappeared, he turned and gave the others a sly wink.

"She is a wise one, to be sure," murmured the Plumed Knight, who had overheard everything.

"That is what we call diplomacy," returned Philippe.

"Razmataz is going to enter her trap like a fly in the molasses barrel," added Sir Adolphus in his usual droll way.

"I hope Sandy succeeds in getting the snuff," said Pinkey; "Won't Razmataz look funny when he tries the w o o d e n powder?"

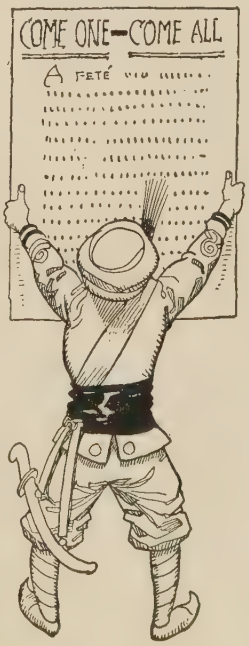
"He'll be as mad as a wet hen," agreed the pig.

As they talked, it was suggested that they see the city. T h e i d e a was approved and adopted immediately. On leaving the garden, they saw a soldier hanging a large sign on a tall

post in the public square.

It read:

> COME ONE, COME ALL.
> A fête will be given at the Temple of Flowers to celebrate the return of the brave chieftain, Razmataz, to the home of Lotus, our Princess. Also to witness the Arab restore to our Princess the power of speech by use of a magic snuff that he has brought with him. The fête will be held shortly after the noon hour. All hail the magic snuff!
> COME ONE, COME ALL.



"It looks as though the royal secretary had been in the circus business," said Philippe, after reading the remarkable sign.

"He is a far seeing man," was Sir Adolphus' observation.

"The Princess is not near-sighted, either, by any means," remarked Sir John fervently. "Ah, she is the loveliest maiden I have ever seen," and he clasped his hands together and sighed heavily.

"You're in love," declared Pinkey, "and I am sure the Princess is in love with you."

"Do you think so?" he asked quickly, his eyes brightening with hope.

"It's a sure case of love at first sight," the pig said by way of an answer. "I never saw a man who could captivate the ladies like you do. I wish I could do it," and he gazed pensively toward the sky.

The Plumed Knight then admitted, "I do love her with all my heart, and if Sandy secures the magic snuff, I will consider it a life-long obligation, my good friends, if you will allow me to give the snuff to the Princess so I may claim her hand in marriage. You may divide the reward."

"With pleasure," spoke the barber cordially, as he shook the hand of the soldier vigorously, "and I wish you a long and happy life."

"Indeed we do!" and they all joined in shaking his hand lovingly.

Such loyal and devoted friendship touched the Knight, and he was barely

The man stood still and listened.

able to murmur his thanks for such kind wishes.

"You overwhelm me!" was all he could say.

As they stood in the street talking, a troop of Arabian horsemen turned the corner and came bearing down upon them at full speed. So suddenly did they appear that the sightseers were barely able to jump to one side to avoid being run over. Sir Adolphus was not quite quick enough and in a second he was knocked down by the foremost rider, and fell, rolling over and over at the feet of his friends.

With a cry of alarm they rushed to his aid and were glad to see him slowly rise to his feet and brush the dust from his clothes. They thought he had been killed. The cavalcade of reckless Arabs whirled by, waving their swords, firing their guns and laughing and shouting in derision at the pig's narrow escape.

He brushed his hat, re-adjusted his monocle, and after calmly gazing at the horsemen as they went tearing by, remarked casually:

"That was a close shave—closer than Philippe ever gave me."

His friends could not help laughing at his odd remark, and as no bones were broken, they were glad to turn the accident into a jest.

"Those are the soldiers of Razmataz, leaving camp to join him at the palace of the Princess Lotus," Sir John declared with a grim smile. "That leaves a clear field for Sandy."

They then retraced their steps to the gardens to prepare for the fête at the Temple of Flowers.

All depended upon Sandy.

* * * * * * *

When Sandy left his friends on the portico of the palace, he went through the gates and walked to the edge of the city. There, spread out like a circus, was the camp of Razmataz. Tents, camels and horses were scattered here and there. Huge piles of merchandise had been unloaded and placed in one corner of the camp. They were the wedding presents for Princess Lotus. Boxes and bales, bundles and bags were everywhere. One tent, larger than the rest, caught the fisherman's eye immediately. A curious flag was draped over the doorway, and he knew it to be the tent of the Arabian chieftain.

His soldiers had ridden away and the camp was left in charge of two men. Otherwise it seemed to be deserted. The Arab evidently did not fear the foreigners.

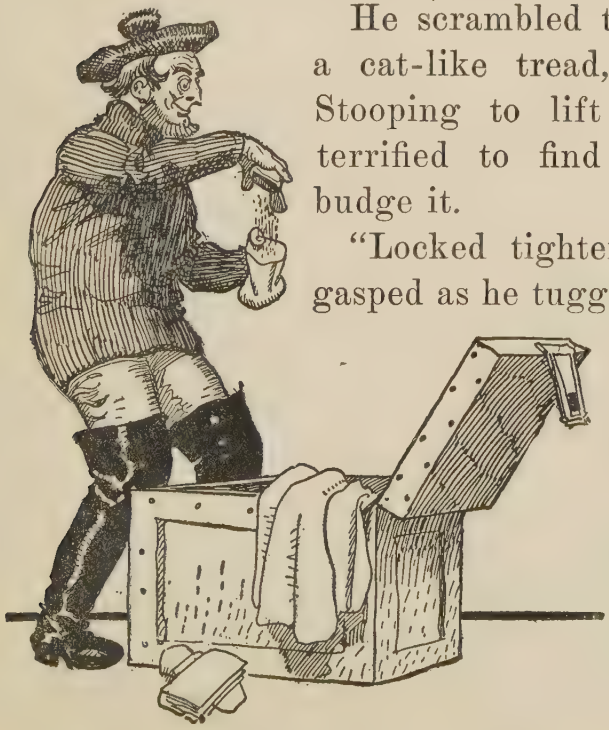
Bending low, he entered the camp and by dodging from one tent to another, succeeded in reaching his goal without being seen. He quickly crawled under the canvas and after glancing hurriedly about was rewarded by the sight of a large brass chest in one corner.

He was on the point of advancing toward it, when, to his horror, he heard footsteps approaching. He had barely time to throw himself flat on the ground behind some boxes when one of the guards entered and

looked suspiciously around the tent of his chieftain.

He had evidently been told by the shrewd Arab to keep a close watch on the chest. Sandy actually stopped breathing while the man stood still and listened. Being assured that all was well, he turned and left the tent, walking rapidly away.

It was a perilous moment for the old sea-dog. Had he been found in the chieftain's tent, the Arab would probably have shot him. At least, his errand would have been suspected and Razmataz would have seen that the snuff box was placed where it could not be found. All would have been lost and their journey a failure.



He scrambled to his feet and, with a cat-like tread, reached the chest. Stooping to lift the cover, he was terrified to find that he could not budge it.

"Locked tighter than a drum!" he gasped as he tugged away at the heavy cover.

He paused, disappointment and rage overcoming him. Was he to fail at the last moment? He looked around the tent carefully, when his eye suddenly

rested upon a large brass key which was hanging from the center pole.

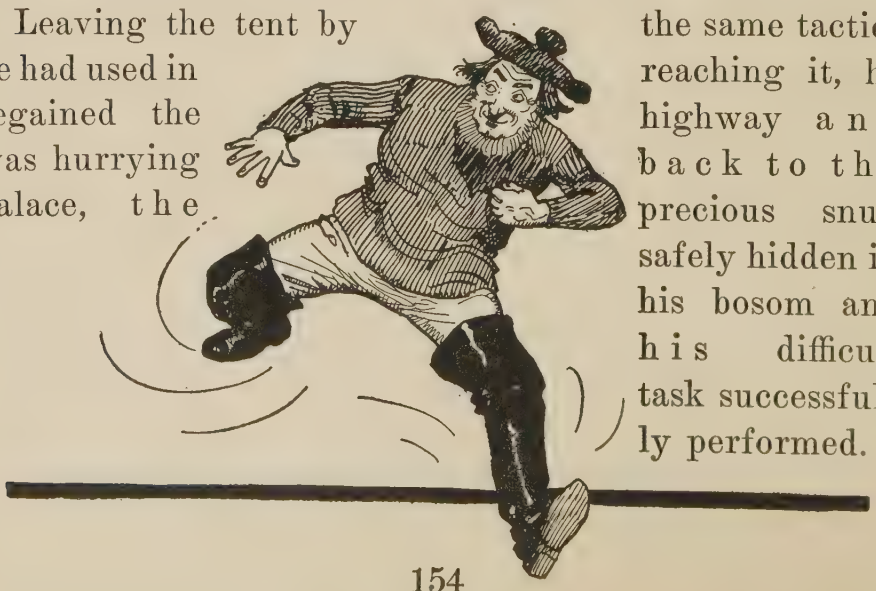
"Perhaps that is it," he murmured to himself, as he reached for it.

He quickly thrusted it into the lock and gave it a twist. The clasp flew open!

He threw the lid back and discovered a curious assortment of knives, pistols, wearing apparel, books, cartridges, and many other odd articles. He rummaged through everything, and was just about to give up in despair when he saw the snuff box down in one corner, almost buried by a miscellaneous assortment of things.

He poured the contents of the box into a bag he had brought for the purpose, and dumped the mahogany sawdust into the box, replaced it in the chest, locked it and hung the key on the pole where he had found it.

Leaving the tent by the same tactics he had used in reaching it, he regained the highway and was hurrying back to the palace, the precious snuff safely hidden in his bosom and his difficult task successfully performed.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RAZMATAZ LOSES THE PRINCESS

On his arrival at the palace, he found the others awaiting him with feverish anxiety. By a significant wink and a sly motion toward his pocket he made them understand that all was well and the magic snuff safe.

They were overjoyed at the good news and a flush of pleasure and gratitude mantled the fair cheeks of the Princess as she realized that Razmataz was to be thwarted.

The chieftain had been bewildered by the cordial and almost loving consideration she had bestowed upon him and his soldiers since their arrival. He felt sure that she loved him and his joy was only controlled

with great effort on his part. He was triumphant.

Lotus had played her game well, and while Sandy was finding the snuff, she kept the Arab's mind occupied with her smiles.

The gardens were filled with his men as they ate and drank under the trees as the guests of the Princess.

The sun had passed the hour of noon, and it was nearing the time for the ceremony at the Temple of Flowers. People in bright turbans and holiday attire were entering the garden, and wending their way along the cool walks that led to the scene of the fête. They were anxious to see the marvelous power of the magic snuff that had been brought by Razmataz. They wanted to hear the Princess speak for the first time in her life.

After partaking of refreshments, Sandy and his friends started for the Temple. There was such a tremendous crowd that the Plumed Knight had to resort to football tactics in order to gain the steps of the Temple.

High above them at the top of the broad marble stairway was placed a gold chair on a royal purple rug. It was here the Princess was to sit when the snuff was to be given her.

A blare of trumpets announced the royal party, and the people separated and made a wide aisle as the Princess' dark soldiers appeared. Following them were her handmaidens, musicians, fanbearers and guards. She was seated in her portable chair. The procession

The Plumed Knight held a pinch of snuff to her nose.

stopped at the foot of the steps and the Princess ascended to the chair, closely followed by Plinto, her faithful secretary, and attendants.

She graciously acknowledged the cheers of her subjects and bowed her head and smiled as only a happy child can.

In a few moments Razmataz arrived, seated on his finest white Arabian steed and followed by his many soldiers, all on horseback. The crowd was driven back as the Arabs formed a semi-circle with their horses at the foot of the steps. Suddenly they each one stood up in their stirrups, unslung their long guns and with one accord fired a volley into the air. It was their salute.

The chieftain ascended the steps, bowed and kissed the Princess' hand. His face was flushed with eager anticipation of his success.

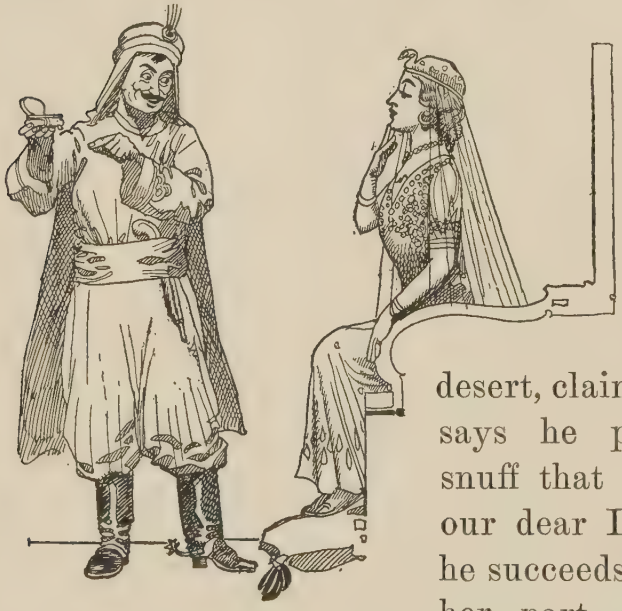
Pinkey and his friends remained at the foot of the steps, ready to appear at the proper moment. For a while they were content to be mere spectators.

Four buglers stepped forward to each corner of the portico and blew their trumpets. The people

became quiet, hushed with awe as the wonderful ceremony was about to begin.

Plinto then raised his hand in a commanding gesture to demand absolute quiet and cried in his loudest tones so all could hear:

"Friends and subjects of Princess Lotus, I have summoned you here at royal command. The Princess announced some time ago that she would reward the person who would give her the power of speech with half her fortune and her hand in marriage.



"Razmataz, chieftain of the desert, claims this reward. He says he possesses a magic snuff that will at last enable our dear Lotus to speak. If he succeeds, she will carry out her part of the agreement. If he fails, he agrees to depart in peace and relinquish his claim forevermore."

Razmataz eagerly nodded his head in assent to this. Everybody saw him.

"But," and Plinto continued impressively, "should Razmataz fail, the Princess renews her offer of marriage

and one-half her fortune to the man who will enable her to speak, the same as you and I."

As he stepped behind the royal chair, the people shouted their approval. Razmataz then approached the Princess and, turning, held the snuff box so everyone could see it. Lifting the cover, he took a pinch of the precious powder between his thumb and finger and held it to the Princess' nose.

Everybody held their breath, expecting to hear her sneeze. She innocently looked up into the chieftain's face in well-feigned amazement. He hesitated and seemed puzzled.

He then took another pinch of snuff and held it to the nose of the Princess, but with no more effect.

Plinto smiled sarcastically behind his hand.

Razmataz' face grew red, first from embarrassment, and then from anger.

He took another pinch—and another—and another, each time holding it to the Princess' royal nose, and waiting for her to sneeze and then to speak.

Lotus sat in her chair, calmly waiting for him to finish.

When the box was empty, the chieftain dashed it to the floor with a burst of rage and yelled savagely, "They lied to me! I've been cheated!"

The crowd hooted him and stormed the Temple in their excitement, shouting and crying, "Out with him! Away with him! He's an impostor!"

Plinto, with the aid of his nimble guards, was barely

able to stem the tide, but his loud voice and commanding gestures soon silenced them.

"Razmataz has failed!" he cried. "Is there anyone else who would like to win the hand of the Princess by giving her the power to speak?"

The Plumed Knight quickly ascended the steps and kissed her hand, his friends close behind him. Razmataz gave a start of mingled rage and hate as he realized the full significance of the trick that had been played on him.

Pyro, the venerable wizard, hobbled near, his frame trembling with suppressed excitement.

After kissing her hand, the Plumed Knight took from his breast the bag of real snuff and held a pinch of it to her nose.

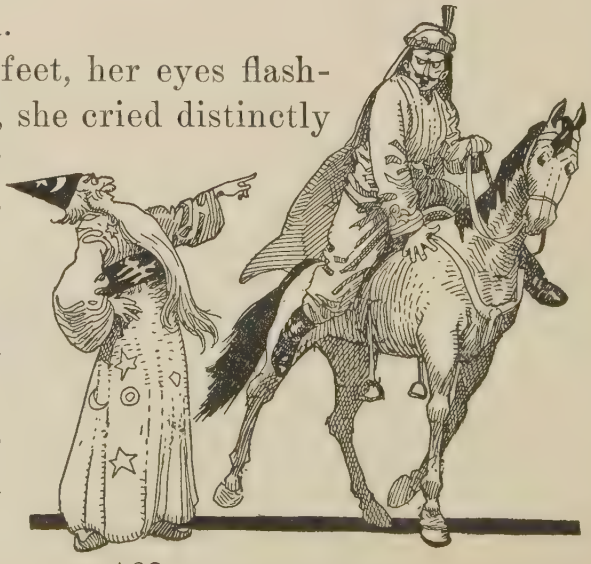
"At—choo! At—choo!"

Lotus had sneezed.

Jumping to her feet, her eyes flashing with happiness, she cried distinctly so all could hear her, "Thank you—thank you!"

They were the first words she had ever spoken.

The people went mad. They shouted and shrieked.



They laughed and cried. Never had such a wonderful piece of magic been performed before.

In the midst of all the joy and noise, Razmataz and his Arabs hastily mounted their horses and dashed away amid the jeers of the crowd, to be seen no more.

Lotus, holding the hand of Sir John in hers, addressed her people.

"My dear friends and subjects, I promised to marry the man who would rid me of my affliction. This brave and true soldier has succeeded. I therefore name him Prince of the Lotus Flowers, and set the wedding for one month from to-day. I freely give him one-half my fortune."

The people dispersed, conversing in awed tones of the wonderful magic the stranger had performed. The balance of the snuff was given into Pyro's hands, and the others of the royal party were invited to the palace where a sumptuous banquet was awaiting them.

There Pinkey and his friends were honored by speeches and words of praise. Sandy was congratulated on the success of his daring in recovering the magic snuff.

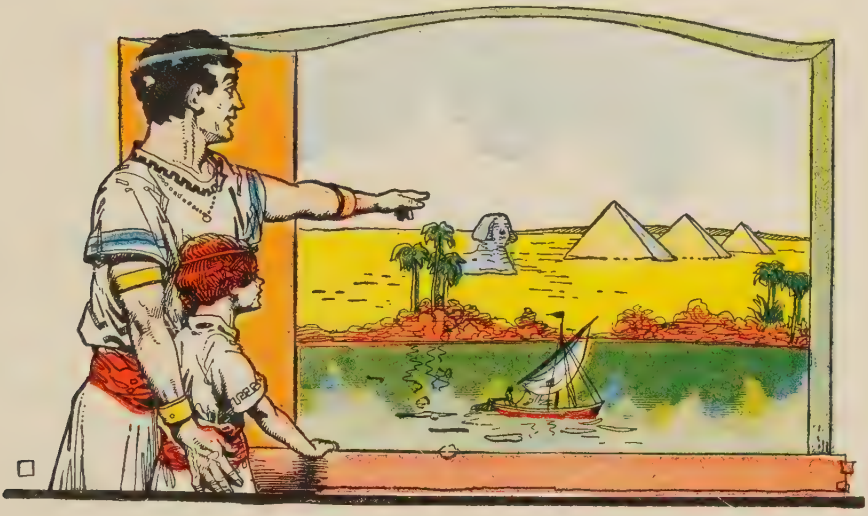
Pyro in his trembling voice thanked the strangers for giving him the opportunity of solving the mysteries of the wonderful snuff.

The Princess thanked them all, and the music of her voice sank deep into the hearts of her auditors.

So sweet and true were her words that all loved her and as she pledged their loyalty and healths in a glass of wine, her glance rested so lovingly on the handsome

Knight that he could only blush and admit that he was the happiest man living.

That night in the quiet of their rooms, Pinkey and his friends agreed that the sights they had seen that day were well worth the trials and adventures they had overcome in reaching the wonderful land of the Lotus Flowers. When all were asleep, each one dreamed of Lotus, the beautiful Princess of the Lotus Flowers.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCESS AND THE PLUMED KNIGHT

During the next three weeks the guests were lavishly entertained. Princess Lotus was so pleased with her new friends, and so grateful to them for the marvelous cure they had brought to her in the form of the magic snuff that she took pains to see no day pass without some form of entertainment.

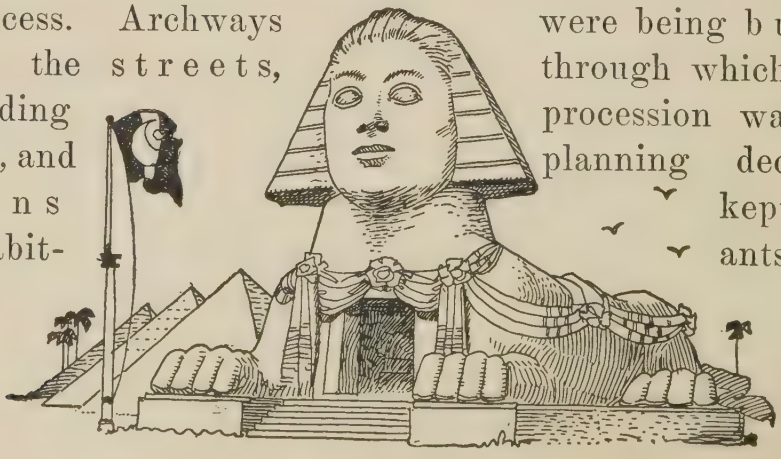
They took long camel rides to the Sphinx and Pyramids. There Ping-Pang, the keeper, showed them all the wonders of these ancient relics of Egyptian art. Fêtes were arranged and dancing girls performed for them, but the most delightful trips were by moonlight in the royal barge as they were rowed by forty strong oars-

men up and down the beautiful River Nile. Every moment was occupied, and Pinkey, in his delirious joy, would often wonder if he were awake or at home in his little brass bed, dreaming.

Since Princess Lotus had found the power of speech, she chattered like a child out of school. Life was full of joy and happiness for her, and with her beloved Plumed Knight by her side, the time passed all too rapidly. She would sit and listen to his wonderful stories of the adventures he had passed through in the days of Joan of Arc, her eyes open wide and lips apart, and when he finished, she would clap her pretty hands together and ask for another one.

She spent all the time with her friends and the droll appearance and funny remarks of Sir Adolphus kept her laughing most of the time.

Great preparations were going on for the wedding. Servants were hurrying to and fro on errands for their Princess. Archways were being built over the streets, through which the wedding procession was to pass, and planning decorations kept the inhabitants of



the city busy from early morning until night fall.

Lotus had arranged to have the ceremony take place inside the Sphinx, before the sacred altar that had been built there thousands of years before by her ancestors.

Ping-Pang, the keeper of the Pyramids, had received instructions to have everything in readiness, and a score of servants were set at work, dusting and cleaning, polishing and arranging the interior with flowers and vines.

Everybody was striving to outdo the other in serving Lotus, and their enthusiasm and hard work bid fair to make the wedding a grand success.

* * * * * * * *

The wedding day had arrived, and as Sir John appeared before his friends, clad in a magnificent uniform of purple, trimmed in gold, a silver helmet on his head, and a short, flat sword at his side, he caused an exclamation of surprise and admiration from them all.

A tiger skin was draped loosely from his shoulders, and his boots were of white kid, with gold tassels and heels.

The streets were thronged with people, their faces wreathed in smiles. Girls with baskets of fruit, water vendors, mountebanks and jugglers entertained them, and little children threw sweetmeats at everybody. They pushed each other good-naturedly, trying to gain the best points of observation along the line of the wedding procession.

Inside the royal gardens all were busy arranging the routine of the cavalcade. Soldiers, camels and horses were grouped about, waiting for the royal couple to appear.

As they approached from the main doorway, trumpets announced them and all saluted.

Two white camels were kneeling, ready for them to mount. The animals were covered with gorgeous trappings, covered with numerous silver bells that jingled musically at their slightest motion.

Attendants assisted the Plumed Knight and the Princess to the saddles, and all was ready.

Lotus was radiant. Her cheeks were like the pinkest of roses and her eyes shone like stars.

Pinkey and his friends each had been provided with a camel and guards to walk on each side.

The trumpets sounded the warning and the procession started on its way to the Sphinx.

As they passed through the gates, a loud shout of welcome from the multitude greeted them.

First in the procession came a band of some sixteen trumpeters, their long instruments shining like gold in the sunlight. Behind them were a hundred or more Egyptian maidens, some with small harps, others with lutes and reeds. These instruments gave forth a weird, yet pleasing musical sound, and blended in sweet harmony with the voices of the singing girls. They were followed by a troop of horsemen gaily decked in purple

The procession returned to the palace.

turbans and white uniforms and carrying long guns like those of Razmataz. The horses were all snow-white, and the pick of the royal stables, each being worth a king's ransom.

Then came the royal pets, two lions and two tigers, held in leash by several dark-skinned and fearless keepers. Behind them, each led by a little boy, were twenty-four of the prettiest zebras ever seen.

Next came the household attendants with baskets of flowers from the royal gardens. These they tossed to the crowds and in the pathway of the two white camels on which rode the Princess and her Knight. Surrounding the dromedaries were the fan-bearers and guards.

Following directly behind the royal couple was a regiment of Egyptian soldiers. Then came the camels bearing Pinkey, Philippe, Sir Adolphus, and Plinto, the royal secretary. Another regiment of soldiers completed the pageant.

The procession moved slowly through the city, across the plains to the Pyramids. Awaiting them was Pyro and two Egyptian priests, prepared to perform the marriage rites.

The Princess and Sir John dismounted and entered the doorway of the Sphinx, which was built directly under the time-worn face of the world-renowned relic of Egyptian handiwork. As Pinkey and the others entered, a marvelous sight met their gaze.

Scattered around the large room in upright positions

were a number of mummies, encased in their odd-shaped boxes, and covered with hieroglyphics. Large stone pillars supported the strangely shaped building and at the farther end of the room was the sacred altar.

Lotus and Sir John knelt down upon two cushions that were placed on the floor.

The priests began the ceremony by first sprinkling a perfume of rare value over the heads of the bride and bridegroom. Then, taking a long cord, they wound it around their bodies several times, the complete circle signifying their lives to be as one.

After many strange words and motions, a priest clipped a lock of hair from each one and placed them in a small casket. Then with a quill and ink, he bade them write their names on a piece of parchment, which was also placed inside the casket. It was then locked and sealed and delivered to Ping-Pang, guardian of the Pyramids, who quickly carried it to a vault, placed it inside and locked it again, after which he returned and bowed before

the priests. Little girls then came forward and threw flowers over their heads, and the ceremony was over.

Lotus and Sir John, now the Prince and Princess of Lotus Flowers, arose to their feet and passed out of the room, mounted their camels and the procession returned to the palace.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

HOMEWARD BOUND

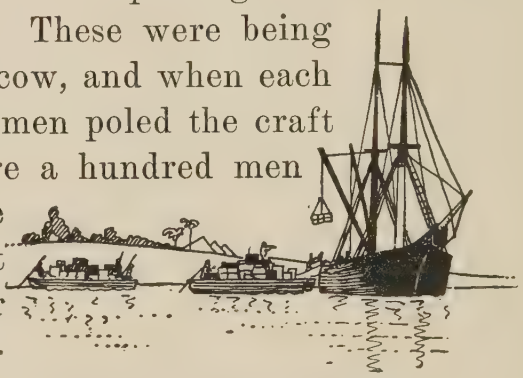
Time flies rapidly in such a wonderful country, and it was with regret that the guests of the Princess saw each hour bring them nearer to the date of their departure. A few days after the wedding Sandy informed the Princess that it was time they were leaving for Scotland.

She smiled and said, "The thought of you and your friends leaving us has often saddened me, but knowing that you must return to your homes some day, I have prepared a vessel for you. Come and see."

Taking her husband by the hand, she led them to the banks of the river. There in the center of the stream was

a stout little vessel, fully equipped to sail any distance or weather any storm.

Camels were arriving and departing after unloading their crates and boxes. These were being placed on a large, flat scow, and when each load was ready, strong men poled the craft to the ship's side, where a hundred men were ready to hoist the load on deck, and store it in the hold. Camel after camel arrived, and boatload after boatload was stowed away in the ship.



"What are all those boxes for?" asked Pinkey, as he looked on the unusual scene in astonishment.

"That is your reward that was spoken of in the snuff box," she answered with a happy smile. "In these boxes are rare tapestries, rich silks, countless jewels, rugs, curios, and thousands of beautiful and valuable presents."

"Are they all for us?" asked the amazed pig, hardly able to believe his eyes.

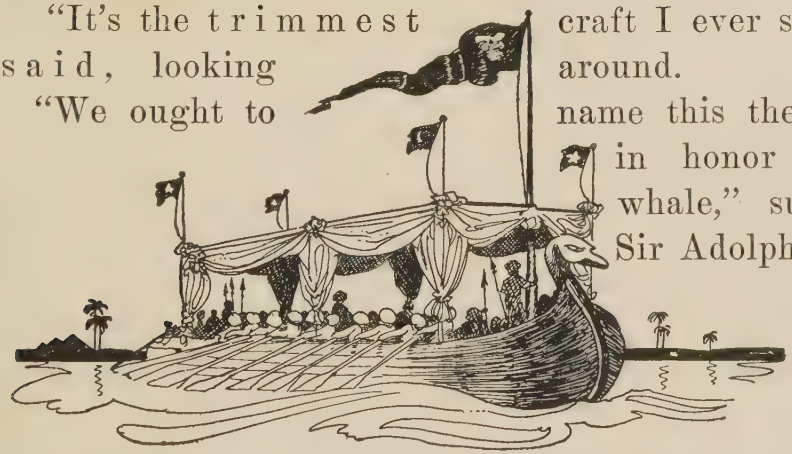
"They are," the Plumed Knight informed them. "They are presents from Lotus for your loyalty and courage in bringing the magic snuff box to her, and if you don't astonish your friends in Scotland with them, I miss my guess."

All were overwhelmed and murmured their thanks as best they could.

Soon the last boat returned, and a guard approached, saluted and said, "Your Majesty, all is ready."

At that moment the royal barge with its bright canopy and many oarsmen touched the bank at their feet. The Princess bade them enter and the men swiftly rowed them to the ship. On boarding, an exclamation of delight escaped Sandy as he observed the ship's completeness.

"It's the trimmest craft I ever saw!" he said, looking around.



"We ought to name this the Cupid, in honor of the whale," suggested Sir Adolphus.

"You're right! From now on this boat is the Cupid."

Sailors hoisted the sails and when all was in readiness, the departing guests prepared to say farewell to their friends, the Prince and Princess.

"Good-by, Pinkey!" cried the Knight, clasping the boy in his arms tightly as the tears flowed down his cheeks.

Pinkey clung to him for a moment and was unable to say a word, so sad was he at losing his friend and comrade.

"I must thank you all for the great happiness you have brought me," said the Princess, her eyes filling with tears.

"We shall miss you and I wish you could stay here forever."

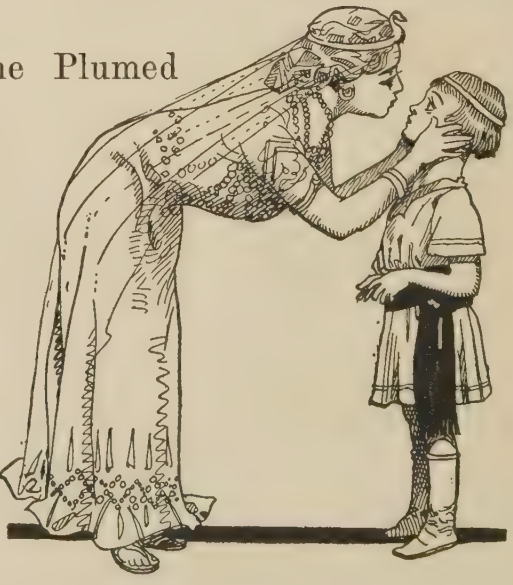
"I wish I could," said Philippe, wiping one corner of his eye with his handkerchief.

"So do I," echoed Sir Adolphus Pigtail, as he removed his eye-glass and blew his nose violently.

"We all do, Princess," added Sandy, "but we'll all come down once a year and pay you a visit, won't we, boys?"

"Indeed we will!" they all cried enthusiastically.

Lotus then kissed each one on the cheek—even Sir Adolphus, though it was so strange to him that he turned pale and trembled. It was the first time he had ever been kissed.



Each one grasped the Plumed Knight's hand fervently and wished him a happy life. The couple then re-entered the royal barge, as Sandy grasped the helm of the ship and shouted, "Hoist the anchor!"

The sailors obeyed with alacrity and as the vessel swung around with the tide, Pinkey and his friends waved a fond farewell to the Prince and Princess, who stood on the royal

barge and they sadly waved their hands in return.

The breeze filled the sails and the new Cupid turned her prow toward the mouth of the river and sailed majestically away, leaving the home of Princess Lotus far behind.

In a few hours the ship plowed its way into the blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea and with a mighty bound they sped along, rapidly making their way toward Scotland.

With light hearts they recounted their wonderful trip and looked forward with pleasure to telling their friends about the adventures of Pinkey and the Plumed Knight.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

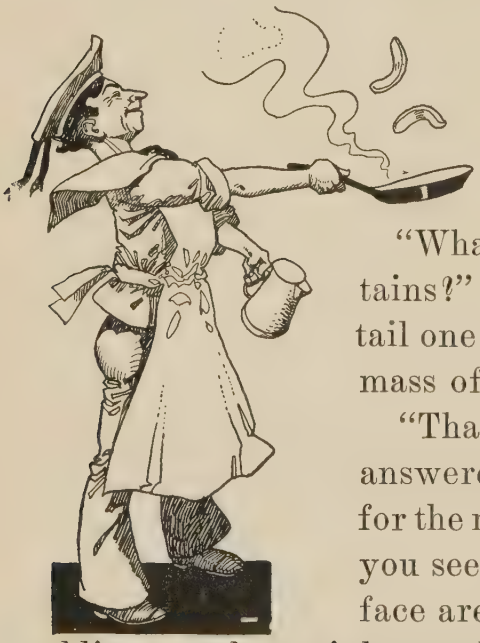
THE STORM

As the little vessel leaned to the stiff breezes that filled the sails and tilted the brigantine well over on her side, a grin of appreciation was seen on Sandy's face. He was well pleased with the trim little craft and, standing at the wheel, his strong hands kept the vessel on her course while Pinkey, Sir Adolphus and Philippe obeyed his orders, pulling ropes, tightening stays and reefing sails.

Philippe had been appointed chief cook, and the tiny galley being well stocked with provisions (another kind thoughtfulness on the part of Princess Lotus) the barber was able to provide his comrades substantial meals

and as the waves foamed about the bow of the new Cupid and the sails forced them through the Mediterranean Sea, everything pointed to a pleasant and successful journey homeward.

The travelers spent many hours talking over their wonderful adventures but above all they missed the companionship of their good friend, the Plumed Knight.



The Scotchman appointed the various watches, each two taking their turns in sailing the ship while the others slept.

"What are those large mountains?" inquired Sir Adolphus Pigtail one morning, pointing to a large mass of rocks on their right.

"That's Gibraltar," Sandy answered quickly, removing his pipe for the moment. "Behind those holes you see dotted across the rock's surface are large guns and hundreds of soldiers, ready to sink any ship that might attempt to fire on them."

"They might sink us!" cried the pig in alarm.

Pinkey was leaning against the rail and sniffed his answer in contempt.

"Foolish, this is a time of peace; those guns are used only in case of war."

"Well, some cruiser fired on us and put our good old friend, the whale, out of business," Sir Adolphus answered in defense.

"They were undoubtedly the Russian fleet sailing for Japan. War has been declared between Russia and Japan, but these coast countries are all at peace with one another. So do not worry—those guns won't harm us," and the Scotch lad smiled as he saw the look of relief on the pig's face.

They were now in the waters of the broad Atlantic and the mariners noticed the difference in the stiffening winds, and the rocking swells as compared to the balmy breezes and smooth, blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

The skipper shifted his wheel a bit and as the little craft turned her nose northward, she careened and tossed about like a cockleshell.

Philippe grew pale and soon a seasick barber was down in the cabin groaning and moaning in the agonies of a heaving stomach.

Then Sir Adolphus' face, usually pink with good old pork red, began to pale and soon he stumbled down the hatchway, a comical sight even in his sickness.

All hands had been fitted out in sailor suits—the jaunty white tam-o'-shanter with band of blue, white blouse with large stiff blue collar, and flaring white pants.

Princess Lotus had seen to everything, and each day discovered some new evidence of her keen thoughtfulness.

Sandy McPherson preferred a tarpaulin jacket, known

as a reefer, and a glazed helmet with hanging lids to shed the water from the splashing waves.

"Sonny," he cried against the stiff wind to his little red-headed companion who had braved the sickness and was gaining a sturdy little pair of sea legs, "it looks as if me'n you'll have to run this ship for a while. Our two mates are a couple of landlubbers! Are you game?"

The boy grinned and he answered, "I'm all right! Guess we can manage between us," and the old Scotchman blew the smoke from his mouth and said:

"Pinkey, you're a brave lad. You're the brawniest little Scotchman it's ever been my pleasure to meet. In the hold of this vessel are enough valuable treasures to make each one of us rich—and we owe it all to you."

"Not to me, Sandy," the boy observed generously, "I guess we all did our share. I wonder if we shall ever see dear old John St. Germaine—the Plumed Knight. I wish he was with us."

The old fisherman twirled the wheel around and finally answered, "So do I, Captain!"

Pinkey flushed at the compliment.

"And I think we ought to visit him once a year. A wunnerful feller, that Plumed Knight, and a wunnerful snuff they make, those Egyptians. I never thought I would see so many sights in all my life as I have seen since we left Scotland."

"Nor I!" agreed Pinkey. "It has been a trip full of adventure and very successful. We found a beautiful

wife for the Plumed Knight, gave her the power of speech and presented her with a fine fellow for a husband."

"And we gained a vesselfull of costly presents," added the fisherman genially. "So everybody ought to be satisfied,"—and they were.

Sandy cast his eyes to the skies and his face sobered as he noted a dark bank of clouds far away to the north. The wind was freshening and soon severe gusts, each stronger and uglier than the last, made the vessel tilt and race through the foaming, white-crested waves. The ropes whipped and snapped, the timbers groaned and grunted, as did Sir Adolphus in the cabin.

Soon the black clouds were overhead, the waves grew angrier and more vicious, and Sandy strained and held the tugging wheel in place.

Shouting in the boy's ear, he said, "Go down and get those two lubbers up here quick! We'll need 'em. There's a nor'easter coming and we're going to have a fierce storm."

Pinkey crawled along the sloping deck, reached the cabin stairway and stumbled down, shaking Philippe and the fat porker energetically.

"Get up, get up!" he cried to the two sick folks. "We're going to have a storm! The skipper wants you on deck at once!"

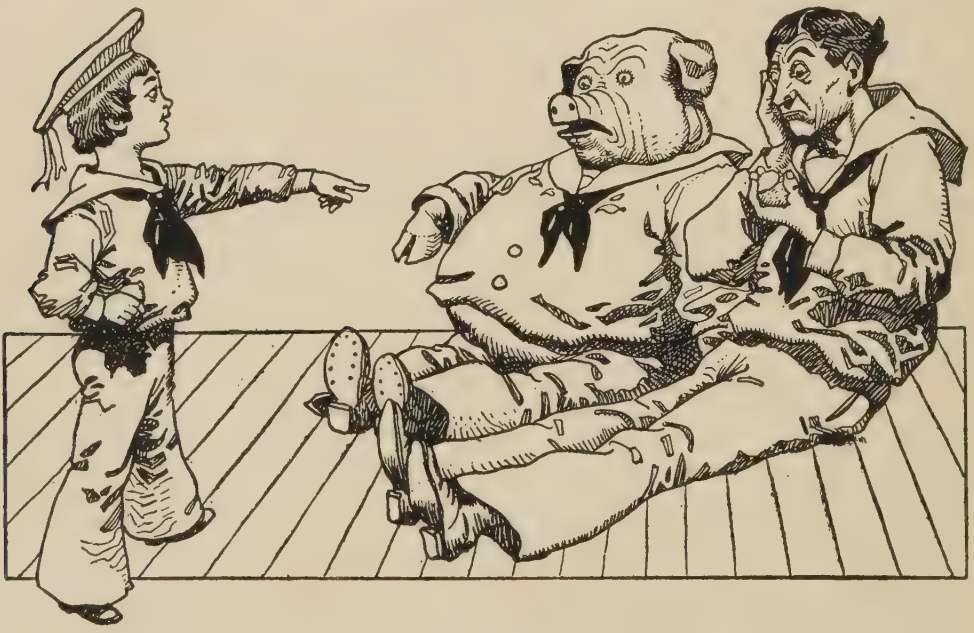
"Oh," groaned the pig, "I can't—I can't! I'm too sick!"

Philippe only rolled over in his bunk and turned his

back to the boy when he heard the summons.

"Let her sink," he said weakly, "I wish she would—then I'd stop being sick!"

The lad saw that he must do something for his comrades. He knew where a box of lemons was. He hastily



searched in the stores and returned to the cabin, a lemon in each hand.

First he waited until the vessel careened at its worst, and then suddenly he pulled the grunting Sir Adolphus from the bunk on to the floor. Philippe next found himself by the pig's side, sitting on the slanting boards of the cabin, and amazement was written on both their faces.

Next he made them suck the lemons, and the wry faces

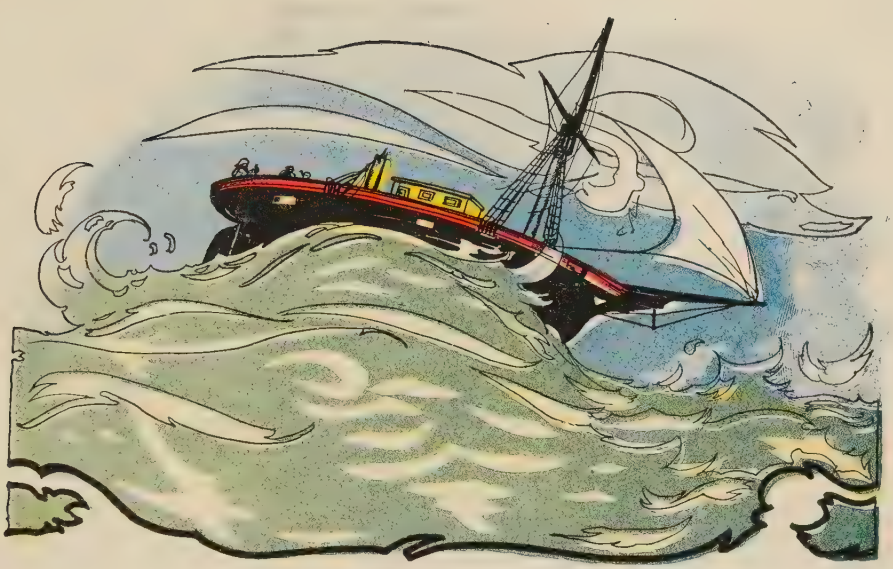
of his comrades as they drew in the bitter juice of the fruit caused a merry peal of laughter to burst from Pinkey. Even in the face of the storm it was a funny sight to see them sitting there, wrinkling their mouths as they obeyed their little Captain. Pinkey was the Captain—so Sandy had said—and he must be obeyed.

"Feel better?" the boy finally asked.

And to their surprise, Philippe and the pig found that all traces of seasickness had left them.

"Hooray!" shouted Sir Adolphus, "I feel fine! I'm going up on deck to help!" and he scrambled to his feet and dashed to the stairway.

Philippe followed, as well as Pinkey, and soon all were hard at work trimming the ship for the approaching storm.



CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE NEW "CUPID" MEETS DISASTER

The clouds were dark and hugged close to them, seeming almost to touch the sea, so low did they hang. The gale was shrieking through the rigging and huge waves came at them full head, breaking over their bows and plunging the tiny craft into a deluge of green-and-white water.

Sandy bawled out his orders and finally Pinkey had to help hold the wheel, so strong were the currents against the rudder.

Then the rain came. Hastily each sailor donned his waterproof, tarpaulin reefer and cap, and none too soon,

for down came the sheets of rain from the weeping skies and fairly flooded them.

The Cupid plunged, tossed and rocked, shuddering at the terrible crushing of the tall walls of water.

Crack! went the thunder and Swish! went the lightning through the skies.

Sandy watched the sails bulging with the force of the wind and he became alarmed as the storm increased.

One big wave leaped over the railing and caught poor Sir Adolphus, slamming him up against the skylight, then rolling him across the deck and in a mass of frothing water he stumbled, fell, floated and bumped.

His shriek of terror was heard by Sandy, who saw the pig's danger and with a cry of warning gave the wheel into Pinkey's clenched hands and dashed and slid across the slippery deck to the porker's rescue.

Just as another mountain of water tumbled over the deck, Sir Adolphus regained his feet to be immediately upset by the second deluge, and was just on the verge of being swept overboard when Sandy's firm hand reached out and pulled the terrified pig back to safety. It was a close shave—as the barber said afterward, and had it not been for the quick action of the old skipper, poor Adolphus Pigtail would have been tossed into the sea and drowned. How glad everybody was that his life had been saved! And how proud they were of Sandy!

The storm was terrifying and as Sandy McPherson regained the wheel a terrific noise was heard overhead—

Sandy's firm hand reached out and pulled the terrified pig back to safety.

it sounded like the deafening report of a cannon.

Looking up, the adventurers saw one of their masts split like a bamboo pole, and topple over, a mass of broken splinters, twisted ropes and torn canvas.

The shock staggered the little boat, and as it rocked on its beam's end, the mast fell into the water, dragging the boat around into the hollow of the waves, which in a storm is the most dangerous position for a boat.

Sandy cried out to Philippe, "Take the axe and chop the wreckage away!"

With a willing, "Aye, aye, sir!" the nimble barber caught up an axe from its fastenings and soon was chopping for dear life at the tangle of wood and canvas.

By this time the waves were beating against the wooden hulk and just as Philippe released the dragging weight, the clouds lifted and there just ahead of them loomed up the shores of a rocky, barren coast.

The sight of this new danger, showing pointed reefs and rocky mounds, over which the breakers were churned into a soapsuds, brought gasps of despair from our friends.

"We're done for!" shouted Sandy, and he ordered the sails pulled in and jumped to the wheel.

As his hands swung the spokes around, there was no pull from the rudder. The steering chains had broken and the wheel spun around like a top.

"Can't you guide her?" Philippe cried out against the noise of the wind, as he saw something was wrong.

"No!" the desperate sailor replied, "she's busted—

we'll drift on a reef and then the waves will batter us to pieces!"

Tears of fright and sorrow filled Pinkey's eyes, Sir Adolphus Pigtail fairly squealed in his piggish terror, and Philippe stood by with axe in hand, his face white with horror at their awful position.

Sure enough, the vessel was drifting rapidly towards the angry reefs and the Cupid's passengers stood by, waiting for the boat to strike.

They did not have to wait long. With a grinding crunch, the vessel lifted and then settled over some cruel, unseen rock and there she swayed back and forth like a teeter-totter.

"We must try to get ashore," shouted Sandy, uncoiling a long rope. "This vessel will be smashed to pieces inside of an hour."

"What are you going to do?" asked Pinkey, as he saw the brave fisherman tie one end of the rope around his waist.

"I'm going to swim ashore, fasten this rope and rig up a breeches-buoy to swing you to safety."

A breeches-buoy is a hanging basket that travels on a rope and carries shipwrecked people from the boat to

shore. The rope must be tight at both ends. This was why Sandy had bravely decided to risk his life—to fasten the rope to some rock on the beach.

"You'll be dashed to pieces!" Sir Adolphus wailed, as he looked over the side of the vessel at the jagged rocks.

"Don't do it, Sandy," cried Pinkey, "you'll be killed!"

"Can't help it!" was the answer. "It's our only chance."

"There goes the other mast!" shouted Pinkey in warning, and they all turned to see their remaining mast crack, splinter and drop overboard.

"That settles it!" shrieked the Scotchman, and leaping to the rail of the vessel, he crouched down, prepared to jump into the water and drag the rope ashore, when a cry of wonder from Pinkey made him pause for a moment.

"Look, look!" the boy cried, and his finger pointed to a big black body tearing through the seas in their direction.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE RESCUE

The shipwrecked mariners rushed to the opposite side of the vessel and watched a big whale speed towards them like a race-horse.

A spray of water was spurted into the air and then a bellowing voice—a voice they had heard before—traveled across the dancing ocean.

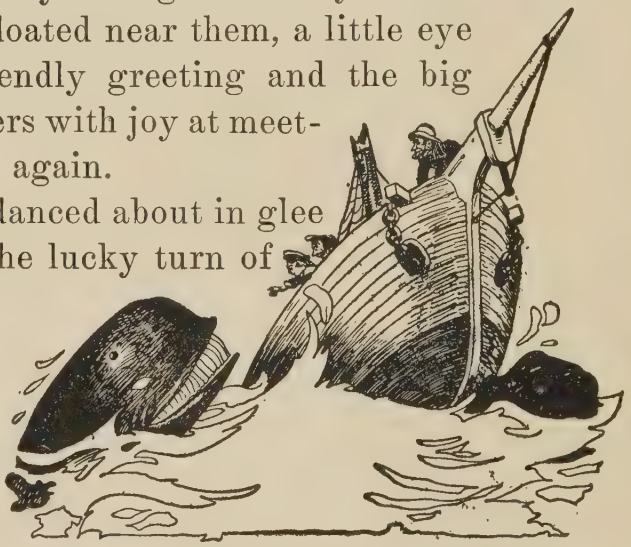
"Ship ahoy, ship ahoy! Is that you, Sandy?"

"It's Cupid, the whale!" shrieked Pinkey, and as the old friends saw the truth of his statement, their eyes filled with tears of joy. They would be saved. Cupid, good old Cupid had recovered of his wound from the shell fired by the man-of-war, and was hastening to the rescue.

"Is that you, Cupid?" Sandy called, as his hands framed the words at his lips.

"Yes—yes! I'm your old friend from home," bellowed the big fish, still speeding toward them.

Soon the black body swung around by the vessel's side and as the whale floated near them, a little eye beamed up in friendly greeting and the big tail lashed the waters with joy at meeting his old friends again.



The passengers danced about in glee and marveled at the lucky turn of events that brought the "old Cupid" to the rescue of the "new Cupid."

"Can you save us?" asked Sandy a moment after they had all exchanged a welcome of words.

"Yes," the big fish murmured from under the waves. "Drop a chain over me. I'll catch it in my mouth, you tie it to your vessel and I'll tow you home."

The storm was not severe at this moment and Sandy, realizing that only prompt action would save them, hastily complied with the whale's instructions, and soon a strongly linked chain was in place and the occupants of the tossing vessel felt the boat jerk, move—and they slid from the back of the hidden rock into deep water!

The Scotchman tumbled down into the hold of the ship, examined everything and returned quickly with a smile of joy on his face.

"She's leaking a little," he told them in answer to their eager questions, "but not enough to harm."

"Where to, Sandy?" they heard the whale ask.

"Home!" shouted the master, and soon the little craft was speeding northward to the welcome shores of Scotland.

As the day passed, the wind died down, the storm drifted to the southward and soon the sun beamed down upon the troubled sea, stilling the waves and easing the heart of many a sailor.

But what a strange craft! Passing vessels gave their passengers an opportunity to see a dismantled, mastless and sailless vessel speeding by as fast as any ocean liner, pulled by a large whale that plunged through the ocean at break-neck speed.

Tourists crowded to one side to view the strange sight, and the odd characters that waved an answering salute from the deck caused many an exclamation of wonder.

Sir Adolphus had regained his polite and easy manner and as he doffed his sailor hat in a graceful bow, the faces that edged the rails of passing steamers were alive with interest and astonishment.

How the little vessel plowed her way homeward in the wake of the swift whale! They were going home—home to dear old Scotland! How pleased they all were!

Pinkey thought of home—his father, the Lord of Dunehurst. Had they missed him? Would they worry over him? To be sure they had! Pinkey's father had missed the boy but the day before. They supposed he had gone to visit his grandfather, but the old gentleman's sudden arrival at Dunehurst disclosed the fact that Pinkey had been missing for over a month.

The boy's mother was frantic. Search was made, alarm bells were rung, and soon they were able to trace the boy and his odd companion to the shores by the fisherman's home—where the whale oil school had been abandoned, where the empty house, the idle barrels and the general air of neglect told them the owner had left.

Inquiries brought the statement from a lad who had been fishing near by the day the party sailed out of the bay on the back of Cupid, the whale, that he had seen all that happened but the sight was so unusual that the poor boy had decided it must have been a dream.

He related the scene in detail to the anxious "Laird" of Dunehurst, who suspicioned that some unusual adventure had taken place and his son Pinkey was the principal character.

"They sailed out to sea on the back of a whale," the boy told him, "and there was a big pig all dressed up, a man all dressed in tin (that was the Plumed Knight), Philippe, the barber, and Sandy McPherson. It was a wonderful sight, Sir! I could scarcely believe my eyes, Sir!"

The suit of armor in the library at home had been missed and so, eager to solve the mystery, the "Laird" hastily ordered his private yacht put in commission and with his wife on board, they steamed out to sea in the big, white, glistening, sea-going craft, prepared to hunt the world over for their lost boy and his odd companions.

They had been running southward for twenty-four hours when the mate up above shouted, "Ship in sight, Sir!"

Pinkey's father and mother, together with the sailors rushed to the side of the yacht, and in the distance they saw a small schooner, with two stumps sticking up for masts, rapidly approaching.

For a while they were puzzled at the speed the vessel was making. It did not appear to be a steamboat, and it was only after they drew nearer that they discovered to their amazement that the vessel was being towed by a huge whale.

"Wonder of wonders!" gasped the Lord of Dunehurst.

"I see him! My boy, my boy!" and Pinkey's mother waved her handkerchief to the little sailor lad, who waved back frantically.

"It's father and mother! That's the Thistle, our yacht!" he informed his companions.

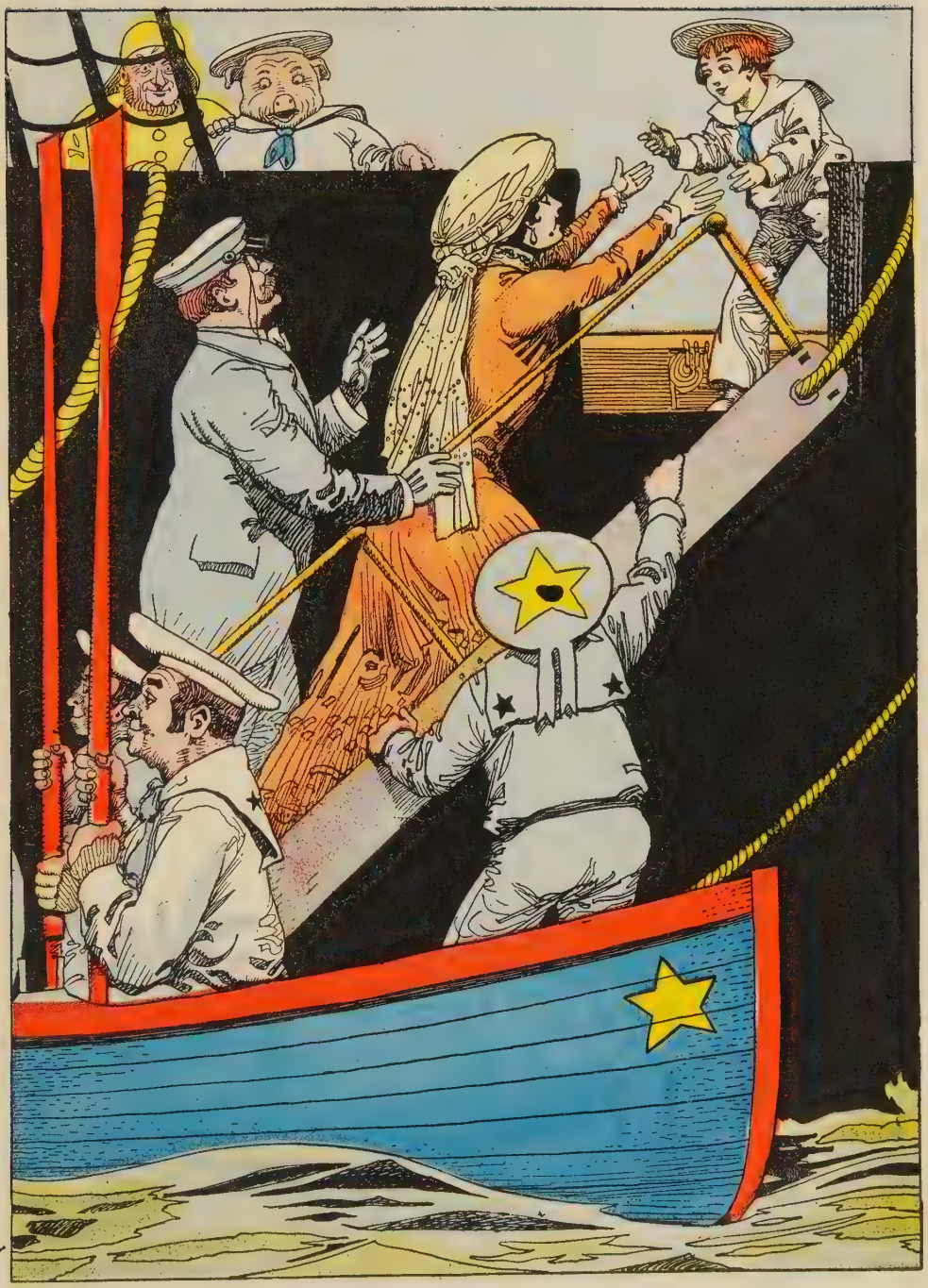
The two vessels rapidly approached and Cupid would have kept right on in terrific speed had not Sandy called to him.

"Ease up, there, Cupid! Ease up and come to a halt! We want to speak with this vessel."

A sudden slowing up, preceded by a jet of water thrown into the air by the whale, told the wanderers that Sandy had been obeyed.

A boat was lowered over the side of the yacht and Pinkey danced up and down in excitement as the sailors bent to the oars. A man and woman were seated in the stern and it was only a few minutes before a red-headed lad in sailor costume was being hugged and kissed by his father and mother, while the boy's companions stood by in smiling enjoyment of the scene.

"But who are these people?" finally inquired the "Laird," as he glanced in astonishment at Sir Adolphus



A lad in sailor costume was being kissed by his father and mother.

Pigtail and the others, each a curiosity in himself.

Pinkey introduced them one by one, and they were greeted cordially by the rich Scotchman and his wife.

In a few words the story was told, scarcely believed but willingly listened to.

"But where is the Plumed Knight?" asked the boy's mother, looking about her.

"Yes," added the puzzled man. "Where is my suit of armor and the bow and quiver of arrows that hung on the wall? They were valuable heirlooms."

Pinkey laughed.

"That was the Plumed Knight," he told them. "He is now an Egyptian Prince, husband of Princess Lotus, and the only way to see him is to visit him on the River Nile."

"I certainly shall," his father replied with a smile. "But come with us to the Thistle, and bring your friends along."

"What about our vessel?" inquired Sir Adolphus Pigtail.

It was the first time he had spoken, and the visitors dropped back in amazement, so surprised were they to hear a pig talk.

Sandy McPherson stepped forward, bowed his bared head and suggested, "I will pilot the boat home, Sir. The whale belongs to me—I am its master. The others can join you on the Thistle and then we can unload the valuable treasures in the little craft which will more than repay you for the loss of your suit of armor and

arrows, Sir, even though they were heirlooms."

The idea was agreeable.

"Very well," said the Lord. "When you are docked, come to Dunehurst. I must see more of you and talk with you—it is wonderful—too wonderful to believe. Come," and after shaking hands with Sandy, they started to enter the boat that awaited them by the side of the vessel.

Sir Adolphus Pigtail hung behind, either in fright or embarrassment.

"Hurry, Adolphus!" cried Pinkey, looking back and beckoning to the pig.

"I'd rather not," he answered. "Your father might send me to market and I've had so many narrow escapes that life is very sweet to me."

All burst out laughing, and the Lord of Dunehurst assured the wonderful pig that he would be an honored member of the family, with a suite of rooms at his disposal in the stables and all the luxuries that money could buy for an intelligent and gentlemanly pig.

Sir Adolphus thanked him gratefully, and soon the beautiful white yacht steamed away with its passengers, while Sandy ordered Cupid to proceed homeward.

This is all there is to the story except that Philippe went back to his shop, took the sign down and opened up for business, though the treasures from Egypt were divided, making each partner rich.

Sir Adolphus was a steady customer of the barber shop.

Plumed Knight

Sandy McPherson gave up his oil business and turned over his choice feeding grounds to Cupid, his favorite whale. And every year the Thistle steamed southward and anchored in the River Nile, while the guests were treated like royalty by Princess Lotus and her husband—the Plumed Knight.

MERLE JOHNSON